

Two Americans detained in Iraq

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The State Department Friday confirmed that two Americans had been detained in Iraq and said the U.S. embassy in Kuwait was in contact with U.N. officials investigating the matter. U.N. military observers in Kuwait said earlier Iraq had detained two Americans who crossed into its territory from Kuwait by mistake. The Pentagon said the incident happened earlier this week. Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Commander Scott Campbell gave no further details. He said the Americans apparently "strayed across the border" and were detained by Iraq. The State Department has been in contact with the families of the Americans and the Polish government is intervening on behalf of Washington with Baghdad. The identities of the two Americans were not divulged.

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Crown Prince meets Bundestag speaker

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Friday met with Rita Sussemuth, speaker of the Bundestag, the federal German parliament, and discussed with her scopes of cooperation between Jordan and Germany in all fields and means of enhancing them. The Crown Prince reviewed the conditions which prevailed in the Middle East in the past few decades and their impact on living standards of the people of the region. He also pointed to the opportunities that peace will offer in the future. Prince Hassan, who concluded an official visit to Germany Friday, stressed the importance of unifying international efforts to support peace in the Middle East. Ms. Sussemuth hailed the democratisation process in Jordan and described it as an example that should be followed by other Middle Eastern countries. She stressed the German government's and Bundestag's commitment towards the Middle East peace process. The Jordanian delegation accompanying the Prince, which included Planning Minister Rima Khalaf and other officials, attended the meeting.

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King meets Eban

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Thursday met with former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, a Royal Court source said. The source described the audience as a courtesy meeting. Mr. Eban is a member of the ruling Labour Party in Israel.

Israel-Syria talks resume this week

TEL AVIV (AP) — Peace negotiations between Israel and Syria will resume in Washington this week and Israel's chief negotiator said Friday that security arrangements would top the agenda. Syria suspended talks in December and it took a Mideast shuttle by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to win Damascus' agreement to return to the negotiating table.

U.S. holds off on Moscow summit

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House Friday was non-committal about agreeing to a May summit in Moscow despite Russian President Boris Yeltsin's offer to play down military trappings in celebrating the allied victory in World War II. "There've been a lot of discussions about the modalities of a summit. There's no decision at this point," White House spokesman Mike McCurry told reporters.

SLA man hurt

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A member of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia was injured in a roadside bomb blast in Israel's "security zone" in South Lebanon on Friday, military officials said. They said the bomb exploded as a military vehicle drove near a village in the central sector of the zone. The militiaman was taken to hospital at the SLA headquarters in Marjayoun.

Sudan dismisses SPLA threats

KHARTOUM (R) — The Sudanese army has dismissed threats by the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to hit targets in government-controlled centres in northern Sudan, including Khartoum, as psychological warfare. Army spokesman Brigadier Mohammad Bashir Sulaiman said the SPLA had been unable to achieve any victories in the south and no longer had any military presence, the official Al Ingaz Al Watani newspaper reported.

Mubarak, Qaboos discuss peace

MUSCAT (AFP) — Sultan Qaboos of Oman discussed ways to advance the Middle East peace process with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who made a stopover here on his way back from Japan, the official Oman News Agency ONA reported Friday.

41 Taliban killed

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani launched an attack on Taliban forces Friday, killing at least 41 of the Islamic students in an area south of the Afghan capital Kabul, Radio Kabul reported. Quoting a Defence Ministry spokesman, the broadcast monitored here said that the pro-Rabbani forces killed 36 Taliban and captured Rishkhor, an ex-communist army base.

Qatari sugar ship docks in Iraq

NICOSIA (AP) — A Qatari ship carrying 5,000 tonnes of sugar docked Friday at Umm Qasr in southern Iraq, the official Iraqi News Agency reported. The agency added that the ship, the Alwakra, was the second to arrive from Qatar with humanitarian aid in recent weeks. Last month, Qatar sent a gift of 2,500 tonnes of sugar to Iraq during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

U.S. Senate approves full Jordan debt write-off

Official welcomes move as positive, hopes it would secure full congressional okay

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan on Friday welcomed as positive a U.S. Senate approval of \$275 million in expenditure to write off about \$480 million in Jordan's official debts to the U.S. and expressed hope that the move would pass through Congress.

The Senate move, on a supplemental bill presented jointly by the dominant Republicans and minority Democrats, came Thursday.

The bill authorised an expenditure of \$50 million to write off about \$115 million in Jordan's debts in fiscal 1995 (ending Sept. 30, 1995) and \$225 million to cancel the rest in fiscal 1996 (ending Sept. 30, 1996).

The Senate proposal was initiated by the Clinton administration after the House of Representatives slashed to \$50 million an administration request for \$275 million.

The next step is a conference of the Senate and the House of Representatives to reconcile the two versions of the bill. More often than not, such conferences, designed to settle Senate and House differences on bills, come up with compromises of half the amount.

But, a senior Jordanian official said, the Clinton administration appeared to be confident that the full allocation would be approved by the two houses of Congress.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who held talks with His Majesty King Hussein in Amman on Monday while in the region in a bid to advance the Middle East peace process, "expressed confidence that the entire amount will be approved by Congress," the official told the Jordan Times.

request for \$275 million. The balance was to be written off in two tranches in fiscal 1995 and 1996. But in January, Mr. Christopher, in a meeting with Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, agreed to do so in one tranche, and hence the proposal sent to Congress.

The proposal was accompanied by a letter from Mr. Clinton administration promised Jordan a write-off of about \$700 million — all the Kingdom's official debts to the U.S. — late last year. It wrote off \$194 million in fiscal 1994.

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Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and his Egyptian counterpart Atef Sedki sign the minutes of the two-day

meeting of the Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee that concluded in Cairo on Friday (Petra photo)

Jordan, Egypt pay tribute to their ties as model for inter-Arab relations

Cairo meeting sets out cooperation goals, urges progress towards comprehensive peace

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and his Egyptian counterpart Atef Sedki on Friday commended Jordanian-Egyptian relations and voiced hope that these relations would become an example to be followed by other Arab countries.

At the conclusion of a two-day meeting of the Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee in Cairo on Friday, Sharif Zeid said in an address in the final session of the meetings that the two sides had added a new leaf to their constructive cooperation and brotherly relations.

"What was agreed upon in the session would enhance these relations and cement collective Arab action, which will reflect positively on our two countries," said Sharif Zeid, who returned to Amman later in the day.

He expressed hope that the Jordanian and Egyptian peoples would soon feel the fruits of this cooperation.

He said the steps which the two countries committed themselves to take during the meetings "make us confident that the Jordanian-Egyptian cooperation should constitute a real qualitative addition and a model for relations between the countries of our (Arab) Nation, especially at this time when the region is entering a new stage during

which our nation is facing various kinds of opportunities and challenges which call for a reasonable level of solidarity and confidence-building among the ranks of our nation."

Sharif Zeid said Egypt had contributed in a pioneering way to laying the foundations of a just and comprehensive peace in the region and had always constituted a force pushing towards regaining Arab rights.

The Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, he said, is a main achievement on the way to establishing peace and is an achievement of the goal Jordan and Egypt had sought for many years.

"Today, as the region is facing the opportunities that a comprehensive peace would offer, we realise that regaining the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese rights is a main requirement for using these opportunities as well as the available resources in order to alleviate the suffering to the people of the region and to provide them with an honourable life," Sharif Zeid said.

"As we concluded this meeting, we look towards having the concerned officials immediately starting what was agreed upon to guarantee translating these texts

(Continued on page 7)

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AMMAN (J.T.) — The European Union (EU) has promised to finance feasibility studies on water projects in the Jordan Valley rivers with 11 million European currency units (about \$14 million), a senior Jordanian negotiator said Friday.

Munther Haddadin, the Kingdom's top negotiator with Israel on water-related issues, also said Germany had indicated that it would participate in the financing of the actual projects after the feasibility studies are conducted.

The projects include dams on the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers and a desalination plant on Lake Tiberias.

Dr. Haddadin was reporting on the outcome of meetings His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan held in Bonn with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Deputy European Commissioner Manuel Merin in an interview with Jordan Television.

During the Crown Prince's meeting with Chancellor Kohl, which was also attended by Israeli Foreign

Minister Shimon Peres, Jordan and Israel presented a joint proposal for the projects.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel told a press conference in Bonn late Wednesday that EU would

(Continued on page 7)

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Clinton rallies behind N. Ireland peace effort

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President Bill Clinton issued a St. Patrick's Day plea to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and rivals in Northern Ireland to push towards lasting peace and surrender their weapons so "violence will never again return to land."

But Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams insisted hours before a controversial visit to the White House that his organisation, a political ally of the IRA, could not bring about disarmament on its own.

"We have no authority or control over arms," Mr. Adams said.

Mr. Adams' claim was challenged immediately by Irish Prime Minister John Bruton, who told reporters outside the White House that even though Mr. Adams lacks technical control of the IRA's arms, "he has tremendous influence over the IRA."

Earlier in the day, Mr. Adams met Mr. Clinton for the first time at a luncheon in the Capitol hosted by Newt Gingrich, Republican speaker of the House of Representatives.

Later, Mr. Adams said he and the president had a cordial conversation of about five minutes. "I do have to

say each time President Clinton has engaged in this peace process, it had had the effect of accelerating it," Mr. Adams said.

The invitation to the Sinn Fein leader for the St. Patrick's Day reception at the White House rankled the British government.

The inevitable photograph of Mr. Clinton and Mr. Adams shaking hands in the White House "is not going to play particularly well in England," said a British official.

Mr. Clinton, at a morning meeting with Mr. Bruton, called for restraint from those still engaged in violence and added: "To those who have laid down their arms, I ask you now to take the next step and begin to seriously discuss getting rid of these weapons, so they can never be used again and violence will never again return to the land."

Mr. Clinton announced that starting April 1, Irish citizens visiting the United States on vacation or business will not need visas.

Mr. Bruton, for his part, praised Mr. Clinton for taking risks "many of us would have thought were foolhardy at times" to promote the peace process by allowing greater U.S. contacts with Sinn Fein.

Stormy Fateh meeting decides to press ahead with peace talks

TUNIS (AFP) — A stormy meeting of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fateh movement agreed here Friday to press on with self-rule negotiations with Israel and keep the organisation's headquarters in Tunis.

The Fateh Central Committee also drew up a plan aimed at ending the "paralysis" in the negotiations on extending autonomy to the West Bank, senior official Nabil Shaath said.

"We have drawn up a detailed plan for the conduct of talks aimed at ending their paralysis and securing an (Israeli) withdrawal and elections," Dr. Shaath said.

Fateh's decisions were to be put to the full PLO Executive Committee meeting later Friday and Saturday to discuss the peace process, he said without giving further details.

The decision was reached after three days of stormy debate here which erupted to a row Thursday between Mr. Arafat and military official General Mohammad Jihad, and resulted in Gen. Jihad's boycott of the session Friday.

He had charged that the Palestinian police force in the Gaza Strip included "criminals."

"You made Fateh put Palestinians in prison, confiscate property, censor the press," Gen. Jihad thundered

at Wednesday's meeting, in a reference to the Palestinian National Authority's crackdown on hardliners in Gaza opposed to the peace deal with Israel.

"How dare you say I am harbouring criminals," Mr. Arafat angrily retorted, prompting Gen. Jihad to shower him with insults before slamming the door behind him and forcing the postponement of the final meeting until Friday.

The emotional debate conceals the issue of who the Palestinians' reference is — is it still the PLO and Fateh, or the Palestinians' self-rule authority?" a senior PLO offi-

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued on page 7)

Hammad, dean of journalists, passes away

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The dean of Jordanian journalists and former minister of culture, Jum'a Hammad, passed away yesterday at the age of 72.

His sudden death, which resulted from a massive heart attack, was mourned as great loss by those who knew and worked with him.

Mr. Hammad, whose career as a journalist, parliamentarian and recently as minister of culture in the government of Dr. Abdul Salam Al Majali spanned many decades, died at dawn yesterday in his hometown of Al Arish (in Sinai) while he was on holiday. He was laid to rest there.

He was still working on his memoirs and his recollection of political events during the early years of the Palestinian problem, which he witnessed first hand.

Although the highlight of his long and distinguished career came with his appointment late in life as senator and then as minister of culture, Mr. Hammad's proudest achievement was his contribution to developing the Jordanian press from what it was in the fifties — an infant, almost resourceless industry — into what it became, when he left the chairmanship of the Jordan Press Foundation (Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times), a self-supporting, even profitable, and technologically advanced



Jum'a Hammad business.

Mr. Hammad had chaired the board of the foundation, the biggest press company in

Jordan, from the early seventies, when he, along with his colleagues (Raja Elissa, Saleman Arar, Mahmoud Al Kayed and Mohammad Al Amad), took over the management of the just-established Al Ra'i newspaper and turned it into Jordan's largest circulation daily.

Mr. Elissa, friend of a life-long colleague of Mr. Hammad, said his death marked a great loss to journalism in Jordan.

"He was one of the best journalists, the most distinguished and the most prominent," said Mr. Elissa, director and owner of the Jordan Distribution Agency. "He had always looked for more achievements and more progress in the field of journal-

ism."

Mr. Elissa, who served as deputy chairman of the board of directors of the Jordan Press Foundation, described Mr. Hammad as a very calm person and a journalist who has made significant contributions to the press in the country.

"He was one who made Al Ra'i successful," he said.

Mr. Arar, a former chief editor of Al Ra'i, described Mr. Hammad as an intellectual person who made "wonderful contributions to journalism."

"He has trained young recruits who have now become professional journalists," said Mr. Arar, also former chairman of the board of

(Continued on page 7)

CONDOLENCES

The editor and staff of the Jordan Times deeply mourn the death of their friend and colleague

Jum'a Hammad

former chairman of Board of Directors of Al Ra'i and Jordan Times newspapers, Senator and minister of culture, who passed away yesterday.

His important role in establishing and developing the Jordan Times will always be remembered and valued. He will be missed by all of us.

هكذا منذ الأصل

Jenin may be next town to see Israeli withdrawal

By Haitham Hamed
The Associated Press

JENIN, Occupied West Bank — Signs abound that this Palestinian town of 35,000 will be the next to witness an Israeli troop withdrawal and the self-rule as part of Yasser Arafat's campaign to take control of the West Bank.

A major Israeli army checkpoint at the entrance to Jenin has been dismantled, and soldiers were seen patrolling the streets Thursday, and dozens of Palestinian prisoners have been bused out of the town's army lockup.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leaders predicted that Israeli soldiers might be gone for good by April or May, even before Israel and the PLO reach agreement on a troop withdrawal from other West Bank towns.

The new hope comes after months of squabbling and delay in the Israel-PLO negotiations on Israeli troop withdrawal and Palestinian general elections.

Handover is already being made in planning for the vote, which probably will be held by September, negotiators said Thursday.

In a nod to the Palestinians, Israel has agreed that the Palestinian self-rule council to be elected will have a majority of PLO members.

Those issues which are under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) they (will) have the right to legislate, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told the Associated Press.

Israel had argued the council should have only executive powers, arguing that legislative powers belong to a state, not an autonomy government.

Only last month it

appeared as if the autonomy agreement were destined for failure. Israel insisted it would not redeploy until Mr. Arafat did a better job fending off attacks by militant groups in Israel. Mr. Arafat promised he would, but did not appear to deliver.

But since last week, Israel and the Palestinians have agreed on a target date for a redeployment agreement — July 1 — and have stipulated that elections will be held within 60 days after the signing of the withdrawal treaty.

Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin are to meet this month to negotiate the terms of troops withdrawal.

With the deadlines in place, the period of uncertainty appears to be over. Target dates can still be missed, but experience in previous Israel-PLO negotiations shows that a deadline may provide the necessary push for reaching agreement.

The two sides also agreed to have two separate votes, one for the members of the council and one for its chairman.

Mr. Arafat, who will likely run for council chairman, apparently wants a separate vote to boost his legitimacy as leader.

Israel's chief negotiator, Yoel Singer, said the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be divided into districts, with each getting seats on the council.

Candidates will run as individuals, not as representatives of parties or factions, Mr. Singer told Israeli army radio.

That arrangement allows candidates by supporters of militant groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, while getting around Israel's objections to participation by

those who advocate the destruction of Israel.

But Hamas spokesman Emad Falouji said the group was not interested. "We are not going to participate in elections based on the autonomy agreement, not as individuals and not as blocs," he said Thursday.

Mr. Arafat wants hardliners to participate because this would be tantamount to their acceptance of the peace accord with Israel. Mr. Arafat's supporters are likely to win a majority on the council.

Mr. Singer said the two sides still needed to agree on criteria for those who want to run in the elections. The Haaretz newspaper said Israel wants a renunciation of violence from all candidates.

Mr. Arafat has told Mr. Peres that one of the first acts of the new council would be to annul the PLO Charter, which calls for the destruction of Israel, Haaretz said.

Mr. Peres also said the two sides have agreed that 1,000 foreign observers will monitor the balloting, with about half from Arab countries.

Meanwhile, Mr. Arafat's security men have already quietly taken over law enforcement in West Bank towns.

Palestinians were confident that the first soldiers could be pulling out of Jenin even before July 1. An Israeli official confirmed "Jenin first" was on the table, but that it was too early to set a date for a troop pullout.

In Jenin, a farming town in the northern West Bank, expectations were running high Thursday.

"We are ready to take control," said Jalal Ahmad, whose Jenin clothing shop displayed T-shirts imprinted with Arafat pictures. "It will be a great day when President Arafat visits us here."

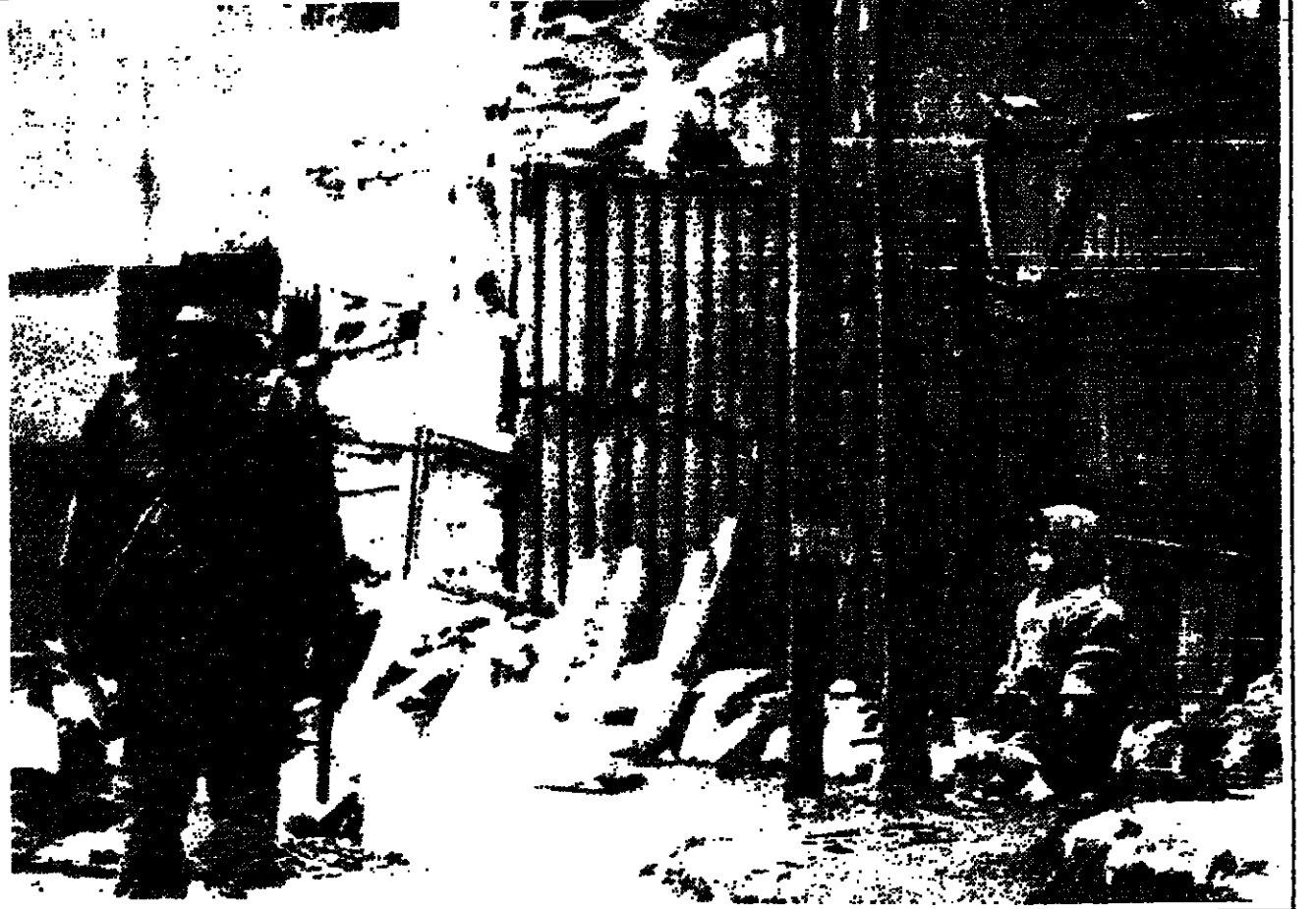
Riots in Istanbul

A LITTLE girl watches a Turkish soldier patrolling the streets of Istanbul's district of Gazi. Turkish authorities on Friday lifted a curfew from one of the districts where sectarian violence has left at least 28 dead this week, the Anatolia news agency said (see page 12).

At least five patrol bomb attacks rocked Istanbul.

In Geneva, Swiss police said firebombs were thrown at Turkish targets in Basel, damaging two travel agencies but injuring no one. Three Turkish travel agencies in Zurich were hit in similar incidents Wednesday night.

In Germany, Turkish businesses in five German cities were damaged overnight. There were no reported injuries. Bonn police linked the arson attacks, which targeted Turkish businesses in Germany for the fourth night running, to the Istanbul clashes.



Gore to visit five Mideast countries, Jericho

WASHINGTON (USA) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore is scheduled to arrive in Cairo Monday on the first leg of a six-day tour of four Arab countries, Israel and the Palestinian autonomous region of Jericho where he will meet with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

After three days in Cairo, the vice president and his wife will travel to Jordan on March 21, Oman and Saudi Arabia on March 22, and Israel and Jericho on March 23 and 24 before returning home.

In a statement, the vice president said the trip "will allow me to renew some old friendships, while offering me the chance to see Oman and Saudi Arabia for the first time."

He stressed that he would like to explore a "cultural dialogue" between the United States and the countries he is visiting. He particularly pointed to his upcoming

meeting with Dr. Hamid Al Ghabid, secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). He added that he hopes to continue with him the discussions he had earlier this year with the grand mufti of Egypt, Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Al Tantawi. There was no explanation of the substance of these discussions.

He added that his trip to Saudi Arabia is "particularly appropriate" since the two countries are this year "celebrating 50 years of friendship and close relationship" which began with the meeting between King Abdul Aziz Ben Saud and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt aboard a U.S. ship in the Red Sea.

Recalling that the U.S. government has had "a vigorous and consistent" commitment to the Middle East peace process, Mr. Gore stated, "we have seen challenges to peace, but the parties involved are continuing to tackle the difficult, fundamental issues involved."

He also seemed to assure Palestinians and Jordanians with whom the Israelis have concluded peace agreements when he expressed confidence that "there will be economic benefits from the peace process for all the countries of the region." He cautioned, however, "these benefits may not be immediate, but they are inevitable."

The vice president's trip follows the visit to the Middle East this week by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who was able to get Syria and Israel to agree on an immediate resumption of their negotiations in Washington.

Mr. Gore's trip will coincide with another by a U.S. cabinet official. Secretary of Defence William Perry was to begin a one-week visit Friday to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

Mr. Perry's theme on the trip will be to advance the U.S. government's three-tiered approach to the Gulf region's security, namely to strengthen the defence capabilities of the Gulf states, to promote inter-Arab security cooperation, and to enhance U.S. ability to deter a crisis.

At a briefing by senior administration officials on Thursday, the purpose of Mr. Gore's trip to Cairo was described as the opening of the U.S.-Egypt Joint Committee for Economic Growth. The objective of the committee, one of the officials explained, is "to focus very high-level attention in both government on effective forms of cooperation in science, technology, economic development and commercial relations."

On the question of U.S. assistance to the Palestine National Authority, another administration official recalled that the United States had

pledged \$200 million in 1993, of which \$90 million are presently at work on projects in Gaza.

He added that the Clinton administration is at present looking into "regrouping \$40 million (of this amount) in employment generating and quick resolving projects."

After noting that unemployment was a major challenge in the autonomous Palestinian areas, the administration official emphasised that "it is extremely important that the Palestinian people be shown tangible benefits from the international assistance efforts and from the peace process."

In Saudi Arabia, the administration official explained that the final details of the trip have not been worked out yet, but Mr. Gore would be interested in learning how the Saudi leaders "view the future development of their country."

World armismakers flock to UAE defence bazaar

DUBAI (UAE) — The world's armismakers are gathering in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to show off their latest hardware at the oil-rich Gulf region's largest weapons bazaar.

The focus is mainly on the UAE itself, which has the longest shopping list among Gulf Arab states spurred and determined to counter Iran's permanent programme.

Although weak oil prices in the past two years have forced some Gulf states to slow down their ambitious weapons plans, the region is still a key growth area for armismakers suffering from post-cold war defence budget cuts in the West.

Saudi Arabia, the region's largest arms buyer with more than \$30 billion worth of deals mainly with U.S. and British manufacturers, has frozen new orders for 1994 and 1995.

A well-placed Arab analyst said the kingdom could consider buying new weapons next year if it succeeded in overcoming cash-flow shortages.

But some of the 500 firms at Abu Dhabi's IDEX '95, the International Defence Exhibition which opens on March 18, hope their hosts would award or declare intentions on multi-billion-dollar deals for frigates, helicopters and up to 80 warplanes.

"UAE might award one of the major deals at IDEX. Many states are guessing

which way it will go," said another Arab expert.

"There are other deals for communication and other equipment also in the works and could be concluded at IDEX. They are less flashy, but still they are worth a lot of money."

The only main UAE deal shortlisted so far is for frigates-based helicopters with anti-submarine capability. Competing are the Seahawk by U.S. United Technologies Corp's subsidiary Sikorsky, the British Super Lynx by GKN PLC's Westland subsidiary and the French-designed Eurocopter.

The most lucrative of the pending deals is for the 80 long-range strike aircraft which some experts expect to be announced later this year but shortlisting is apparently still underway and might not be ready for announcement at IDEX.

At the last IDEX in 1993, the UAE awarded France's GIAT industries a \$3.62 billion contract for LeClerc battle tanks and Westinghouse Electric Corp secured a \$300 million contract for a communication, command and control system.

Experts say the recent French defence pact with the UAE could give France's Mirage 2000-5 and next-generation Rafale an edge in the fiercely contested fighter plane order.

Lockheed Corp and McDonnell Douglas Corp of

the United States modified their F-16 and F-15 aircraft, respectively, to meet the UAE's requirements.

Russia's Sukhoi is also bidding for the deal while Britain offered to lease Tornado planes to the UAE until the next-generation Eurofighter 2000 was ready for export.

High-ranking military and political officials have visited the UAE in recent months to rally support for their weapons but Abu Dhabi has so far not divulged its intentions.

"There will be real work done during IDEX and some firms will make real progress. The UAE will give strong indication of its intentions," said an Arab expert.

During IDEX, the world's first major defence show of the year, the Dutch will display the M type frigate as part of efforts to secure a UAE order, closely contested by the U.S. Newport News Shipbuilding's type 21 frigate.

"This has not been shortlisted yet but the contract could go out this year," said the expert. French, German and two British yards are also in the running for the deal.

Newport, a subsidiary of Teneco Inc., won a \$200 million project in December to construct a shipbuilding yard in Abu Dhabi and experts say the firm can offer a lower unit price as most maintenance work could be done in the UAE.

Perry to assure Gulf states on security

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defence Secretary William Perry is travelling to four Gulf states this weekend, looking to bolster U.S. fire-power in the region and assure friendly countries America is ready to help in the face of potential threats from Iraq or Iran.

Iraq has rebuilt much of its military despite its defeat in the Gulf war and the four-year-old United Nations sanctions, U.S. officials say. Iran recently has deployed anti-aircraft missiles at a strategic point near the southern entry to the Gulf.

Mr. Perry is slated to visit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar on his six-day tour and will meet with leaders of each nation, including Saudi Arabia's King Fahd and Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

A senior Pentagon official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Perry will discuss positioning additional stocks of U.S. military equipment in the region and also meet with some of the 20,000 U.S. troops and sailors who are deployed there.

The visit "sends a message to both Iraq and Iran, which is that we take our defence role in the Gulf very seriously," the official said.

Iraq's threat against Kuwait last October was met by the deployment of the 24th infantry division from the United States within three days. Stocks of tanks, armoured personnel carriers and other weaponry stored in Kuwait allowed the Americans make a quick display of force, the official said.

"The experience... shows that we have the capability and we want to reinforce that we are strengthening that capability, and that we also have the will," the official said.

While equipment to supply an entire brigade is stored in Kuwait, and another is afloat on ships in the region, a formal agreement to stockpile supplies in the region for a third brigade is being worked out with Qatar.

Saudi Arabia has discussed such an arrangement, but no progress has been made on reaching an agreement to store a brigade's supplies there. There are, however, dozens of U.S. aircraft positioned at Saudi air bases.

Mr. Perry is expected to visit the aircraft carrier USS Constellation, now in the Gulf, and the guided missile cruiser USS Gettysburg, which has been positioned in the Red Sea.

Geagea: Government behind blast

BEIRUT (AP) — A former Christian warlord on trial for murder and bombing charges claimed Friday that the government set off a church explosion last year in order to frame him.

Samir Geagea, leader of the now-defunct Lebanese Forces (LF) militia, denied any involvement in the Feb. 27, 1994, blast in which 11 worshippers were killed and 60 injured attending Sunday mass.

"We do not blow up churches," Mr. Geagea told Judge Philip Khairallah, president of the judicial council, the highest court in Lebanon.

His right-wing militia, which was allied with Israel during the 1975-90 civil war, was outlawed after the bombing of the Notre Dame de la Delivrance Maronite Catholic church in the Christian town of Jomieh north of Beirut. Mr. Geagea and top aides later were arrested.

In his testimony, Mr. Geagea bluntly accused the Syrian-backed Beirut government of using the explosion as a pretext to dismantle the Lebanese Forces, which fielded the largest Christian militia during the civil war.

"It has become clear to me that the government was behind the church bombing," he told the court.

"If the government hadn't dissolved the Lebanese



Samir Geagea

Forces, another operation would have been carried out to blame it on the Lebanese Forces for the purpose of destroying it," he said.

Mr. Geagea has been in a prison at the suburban Defence Ministry for nearly a year. His trial began in November.

The former warlord is charged with masterminding the church bombing in order to rekindle the civil war, overthrow the government and proclaim a Christian mini-state in the Christian heartland northwest of Beirut.

He also has been implicated in the 1990 assassina-

tion of rival Christian politician Dany Chamoun, Chamoun's wife and the couple's two young children.

Mr. Geagea, the only civil war militia leader to stand trial, has pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

Lebanese authorities have accused Israel of attempting to destabilise post-war Lebanon through bombings and assassinations. Israel has not commented on the claims.

During Friday's testimony, Mr. Geagea acknowledged that he visited Israel several times during the civil war to seek military aid.

Another Lebanese Forces suspect, whose pre-trial testimony provided the prosecution with the case against Mr. Geagea, has withdrawn his confessions in court.

Gerges Khoury claimed he confessed to blowing up the church under duress. But Mr. Khoury, too, has admitted he visited Israel in violation of Lebanese laws that prohibit such trips and all dealings with the Jewish state, officially an enemy country.

Mr. Geagea, whose name spelled terror in the Christian heartland during the civil war, has opposed the government's policies since the conflict ended.

He was once named cabinet minister but resigned shortly afterward, complaining that the government was too tilted towards Syria.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 7311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Le Prince Et La Sirène

17:30 Pyramide

18:15 D'Artagnan Amoureux

19:00 News in French

19:15 Fa Ut Pa Revora

19:30 Road to Avonlea

20:15 The Nanny

21:10 The Cape Rebel

22:00 News in English

22:30 Ruth Rendell's Mystery

23:59 Piano Concert No. 1 (Bach)

PRAYER TIMES

05:22 Fajr

06:39 (Shiruk) Duha

11:04 Dhur

15:16 'Asr

17:09 Maghrib

18:27 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Suffield, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel.
637618

St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590.

Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Evangelical Church Tel. 623646

Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623641.

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel.
628543.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
711331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
713361.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717151.

Armenian International Church Tel.
652526.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
624328.

German-speaking Evangelical Con-
gregation Tel. 684195

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman
Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-
ment of Meteorology.

Temperatures will rise slightly
becoming around average with
clouds appearing at different alti-
tudes and wind northwesterly moder-
ate. In Aqaba, winds will be
northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 6 / 16

Aqaba 12 / 26

Desert 5 / 18

Jordan Valley 11 / 25

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 14, Aqaba 23 Humidity

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

readings: Amman 62 per cent.
Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Fakhri Tayeh 685880

Dr. Yousef Al Fakhri 756988

Dr. Bassim Qaddumi 648633

Dr. Youssef Abdou 694916

Firas pharmacy 778336

Ferdows pharmacy 661912

Al Asme pharmacy 637053

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Simelani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

REID:

Dr. Ali Al Shogair 246140

Alquds pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:

Dr. Rajeh Sager 901290

Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 773121

Highway Police 834002

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Amman Municipality 787111

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636881

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussien Medical Centre 813813/332

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6

Aklich Maternity, J. Amn 644241/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642562

Mallat, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeitani 664171/4

Shmeitani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Musharraf Hospital 657271/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666127/57

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajireen 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 622403/30

Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)985732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999990

REID:

Princess Beama Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)547700

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia In-
ternational Airport Tel. (08)33200.
S, where it should always be veri-
fied.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
(Terminal 1)

06:45 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)

09:15 Agaba (RJ)

09:45 New Delhi (RJ)

09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)

18:15 Beirut (RJ)

18:25 Colombo (RJ)

18:30 New York, Amsterdam, Frankfurt
(RJ)

16:50 Cairo (RJ)

17:30 Frankfurt (RJ)

17:55 London, Berlin (RJ)

18:30 Vienna (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:20 Vienna (OS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
(Terminal 1)

06:25 Beirut (RJ)

07:30 Aqaba (RJ)

11:00 Vienna (add) (RJ)

11:00 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

11:45 Paris (RJ)

12:45 London (RJ)

13:45 Cairo (RJ)

13:50 Geneva, Brussels (RJ)

13:50 Laraca (RJ)

19:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)

20:30 Jeddah (RJ)

20:40 Damascus (RJ)

21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:30 Laraca, Rome (AZ)

07:45 Beirut (ME)

11:50 Hudakiah, Sanaa (TY)

12:50 Vienna (OS)

13:15 Dubai (EK)

22:40 Laraca (CY)

23:00 Cairo (MS)

23:59 Damascus, Paris (AF)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700 / 500

Banana 620

Banana (Mukammal) 680

Cabbage 100 / 50

Carrot 160/80

Cauliflower 180 / 100

Cucumber (large) 220 / 60

Cucumbers (small) 220 / 120

Eggplant 140/80

Garlic 1200/80

Green beans 220 / 120

Leamon 330 / 220

Marrow (large) 100 / 50

Marrow (small) 130 / 80

Onion (green) 230 / 120

Onion (dry) 380 / 250

Orange 450/350

Pear 500 / 400

Pepper (hot) 500 / 400

Pepper (sweet) 320 / 220

Peas 300 / 200

Spinach 120 / 60

String Beans 350 / 400

Tomato 200/100

02:20 Amsterdam (KL)

02:40 Athens (OA)

HAJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

مكتبة الامانة العامة



A JAFU-FRANCO EVENING: Her Royal Highness Princess Basma and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Marai Al Kaabneh (left) on Thursday attended a concert by the Jordanian Armed Forces Orchestra held at the Royal Cultural Centre. The orchestra performed under the baton of French con-

Journalists, staff of party papers not eligible for JPA membership

AMMAN (Petra) — Journalists and other staff of political party newspapers are ineligible for membership in the Jordan Press Association (JPA), the Bureau for the Interpretation of the Law at the Prime Ministry said in a decision it has taken recently and only released Friday.

The bureau said it took its decision after reviewing the Press and Publication Law and the JPA Law.

It said that in accordance with the press law, political parties could not be considered as publishers and therefore personnel who publish party newspaper did not qualify for JPA membership.

The bureau, made of three senior judges and two government legal advisors, based its ruling on the Press and Publication Law's definition of a publisher of a newspaper, which, it said, did not include political parties.



Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation President Maan Thibyan, organisation Secretary General Mohammad Malallah, representing the organisation's International Arbitration Centre of Jordan, Iranian Charge d'Affaires in Amman Sa'eed Al Batini and a representa-

Woman found hanged; suspect arrested

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 24-year-old Ajloun woman who had been reported missing since Monday was found hanging from a tree in a forest near Muthalah Eshtefina; police arrested a male suspect in connection with the reported murder hours after the woman's body was found, police sources said.

A police official told the Jordan Times Friday that a 32-year-old man, identified as Ahmad M., was arrested Thursday shortly after the body of the missing woman was discovered by police.

"We received a tip that a man from Al Mazra could be the prime suspect in the case," the official said.

According to the official, when the police arrested the man, he showed no resistance and confessed to committing the crime.

He added that the suspect used his bare hands to strangle the woman, then he tied the victim's scarf around her neck and hanged her from a tree with the same scarf.

According to one source, speaking on condition of anonymity, the woman, identified as Khuloud M.H., was reported missing from her home in Ein Janah since Monday.

The source said the suspect, who is married and is employed as a baker in Al Mazra, had a relationship with the woman, and that "he had asked for her hand in marriage, but her family had refused."

"The suspect had a physical relationship with the woman, and when her family refused his proposal for marriage, he decided to kill her in revenge," the source said.

The source said that the suspect took the victim on March 13 to the forest, "and after a heated discussion about their situation, he killed her."

According to Civil Defence Department (CDD) officials, the woman's body was taken to hospital for an autopsy.

"I can't give any details concerning the victim or the crime, all I can say is that there was no indication of a rape," the CDD official said.

NMC, Instituto Cervantes to present Spanish guitarist Josep Henriquez

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Music Conservatory (NMC) and Instituto Cervantes in Jordan tonight present a guitar recital by renowned Spanish guitarist Josep Henriquez at the Royal Cultural Centre, an NMC statement said.

Born in Barcelona, Mr. Henriquez is considered among today's finest classical guitarists.

He has played throughout Canada, Turkey, Russia, Africa, Central and South America and the United States.

Mr. Henriquez has participated in international festivals, performed as guest soloist with major symphony and chamber orchestras, such as the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, the Soudierland, Symphoniker and has also given recitals at such prestigious halls as the Tschaikovsky Theatre in Moscow, Wigmore Hall in London, the Library of Congress in Washington and the Beijing Concert Hall, the statement said.

In 1981 Mr. Henriquez was the guitar professor at the Music and Arts Institute of San Francisco, California and since 1982 he has been head of the Guitar Department at the Music Conservatory of Granollers in Barcelona.

In 1992 he was invited to create the first classical guitar department in China at the Central Conservatory in Beijing. In addition to performing, Mr. Henriquez is often requested to give master classes and lecture demonstrations around the world and has served as judge in international competitions.

His musical personality and instrumental technique have earned him an international reputation, according to the NMC statement.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- | FILM | EXHIBITIONS |
|--|---|
| ★ Film (in German) entitled "Zweikampf" (with subtitles in English) at Goethe-Institut at 8:00 p.m. | ★ Exhibition of abstract art by Abeer Bawwab at the Royal Cultural Centre. |
| ★ Guitar recital by Josep Henriquez (organised by the National Music Conservatory and Instituto Cervantes) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. | ★ Exhibition of paintings by several artists entitled "Faces" at the Balqa Art Gallery, Fuhais. |
| | ★ Exhibition of paintings by Nazli Irtemcelik at Alfa Art Gallery. |
| | ★ Exhibition of art by Rula Shukairy at the French Cultural Centre. |

Bahraini information minister praises Jordan's efforts to rebuild Arab solidarity

AMMAN (Petra) — Bahraini Information Minister Tareq Al Mu'ayyad Friday described Jordanian-Bahraini relations as strong and solid, and said Bahrain supports the Kingdom's efforts to rally Arab ranks.

Mr. Mu'ayyad, who arrived in Amman Friday on a three-day official visit to the Kingdom upon an invitation by Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Khaled Karaki, said the Arab World was currently in need of solidarity to be able to counter challenges facing it.

He commended efforts by Jordan to mend Arab fences and said Bahrain fully backs such efforts.

"At a time when we find Jordan always supporting the Arab nation in all its causes, we want to support it in order to resolve all inter-Arab disputes and conflicts," Mr. Mu'ayyad said in an arrival statement.

He told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that Bahrain will support any effort taken through the Arab League to mend Arab fences.

Expressing his country's support for Jordanian calls to unify ranks, he said Bahrain supports Jordan in its endeavours as it supports other Arab countries taking such moves.

Mr. Mu'ayyad voiced pride in visiting Jordan and said he will convey to His Majesty King Hussein the greetings of the Emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Issa Ben Salman Al Khalifah, and those of the Bahraini people and government.

Mr. Mu'ayyad is accompanied on the visit by a delegation comprising Ministry of Information Undersecretary for Radio and Television Affairs Hala Al Umran, Director of Bahrain Radio Abdul Rahman Abdullah, Director of the News Department at the Radio and Television Corporation Abdul Al Rayyani, head of the corporation's television production Qahtan Al Qahtan, Al-Ayyam newspaper Chief Editor Nabil Al Hammar and Al Khalij News Director General Anwar Abdul Rahman.

Mr. Mu'ayyad will hold talks with Dr. Karaki on bilateral relations in media-related fields and means of enhancing them.

The minister will also meet with senior Jordanian officials and representatives of Jordanian mass media institutions.

He was received at the airport by Dr. Karaki, Secretary General of the Ministry of Information Nayef Maula, Director General of the Radio and Television Corporation Ihsan Ramzi, Director General of the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Abdullah Uroum, Director of the Press and Publications Department Mohammad



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Khaled Karaki Friday receives Bahraini Minister of Information Tareq Al Mu'ayyad upon his arrival in Amman with a delegation of Bahraini media officials (Petra photo)

Min, Radio Jordan Director Hashem Khaziat and Bahraini Charge d'Affaires in Amman Abdul Rahman Al Suleiti.

Last month, Jordan and Bahrain signed a draft executive programme to launch cooperation in information-related fields. The draft agreement, signed on the Jordanian side by Mr. Maula, who led a Jordanian delegation to Bahrain last month, and Ms. Umran, provides for the two countries to exchange radio and television messages, hold training programmes for personnel working for information services, coordinate in the use of satellites for radio and television broadcasts, exchange radio and television news and other programmes, conduct joint production work, coordinate on publications and the work of the national news agencies and exchange publications and media expertise.

Temperatures expected to rise — meteorologist

AMMAN (J.T.) — A slight rise in temperatures is expected Saturday as the low air pressure which affected the Kingdom on Thursday starts to decrease, meteorologist Jamal Musa said Friday.

Mr. Musa told the Jordan Times that some clouds should appear at various altitudes, and winds will be northwesterly moderate.

On Sunday, he said, a drop in temperatures is expected, and there will be a chance of scattered showers, especially in the northern parts of the Kingdom.

On Monday and Tuesday, another rise in temperatures is forecast, he added.

On Thursday, rains fell on the northern and central parts of the Kingdom capping several weeks of dry weather.

Ministry of Agriculture officials Friday were quoted in the Arabic press as saying that the rains were good for the agricultural season.

They said that precipitation was especially good for field crops which were suffering from the dry weather over the last several weeks.

The Department of Meteorology on Friday said the highest rainfall was recorded in the northern part of the Kingdom, with Irbid receiving 7.8 millimetres (mm) and Al Koura district receiving 8.5 mm.

Al Salt city, in central Jordan, received only 0.7 mm.

HCST survey to define national scientific, technological needs

AMMAN (Petra) — The Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) is conducting a survey to define national scientific and technological needs and capabilities.

Mohammad Majali, director of the survey project, said the results of the survey will be used in preparing a national plan for scientific research and developing specialised manpower to benefit the country's development process.

In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Majali said the survey aims to pinpoint technical problems facing national institutions and to define their needs for qualified and well-trained personnel.

In addition, the survey will help define the needs national institutions for scientific and technological research and services, he said.

The survey, he noted, constitutes a base for developing science and technology policies and their applications in Jordan.

It will include all ministers and private and public institutions employing at least five people, he said, adding that the number of these ministries and institutions totals 8,000 according to 1994 figures available at the department of statistics.

Mr. Majali said the HCST has already completed the first stage of the project which entailed preparing a questionnaire and defining the names and addresses of the institutions that will answer these questionnaires.

He added that the department started field work which involved distributing these questionnaires to the institutions.

The third stage, he said, will entail writing down and analysing the results of the questionnaire which will be followed by preparing a detailed report.

He said the questionnaires were based on ones prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Mr. Majali said the HCST earlier conducted three surveys for the same purpose. The first was in 1978, the second in 1980 and the third in 1986, he said.

Islamic Relief Agency, Japan sign contract to support small income-generating project

By Cathy King
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government of Japan signed a contract Thursday with the Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA) in support of the agency's social and economic projects and within the framework of the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GAGP).

The contract, signed between Japanese Ambassador Yuji Ikeda and ISRA's Regional Director for Middle East Affairs Khaled Sudanee, guarantees ISRA \$88,286 and will be extended by Japan's GAGP.

"The Japanese government started its grant assistance (programme) to Jordan one year ago," said Mr. Ikeda who added that through the GAGP programme Japan has extended \$655,725 for 11 projects implemented by various organisations in the Kingdom.

"The signing of the contract will trigger the realisation of an income-generating project ... particularly in Asmi Mufri refugee camp, Hartha, west of Mafraq, Mazza, Taybeh and Tafleeh," Mr. Sudanee said.

The grant awarded to ISRA will finance a project aiming at self-sufficiency among Palestine refugees and others living below the poverty line in Irbid, Karak and Tafleeh.

It will entail the plantation of thyme, a medicinal herb, on 40 dunums of arable land in the districts of Karak and Tafleeh and 30 dunums in the Irbid district.

"Thyme, being a sought-after commodity locally and abroad because of its fine taste and smell, and medicinal quality, is a very good source of continuous income for the beneficiaries," said Mr. Sudanee.

According to an ISRA statement, the project will take two years to complete and intends to benefit a maximum of 200 families.

"At the end of the first year it is expected to reach the breakeven point, and by the end of the second year it will gain profits for the targeted group," the statement said.

Targeted families are those who live beneath the poverty line, as defined by the Ministry of Social Development. About 50 families who fall into this category and own small plots of land will be selected.

The statement said the land area may be as small as 2x4 square metres or as large as one dunum.

Apart from the families, who are expected to attain self-sufficiency after two years, the statement says the project will also "answer the need for thyme in the local market and will help create a new batch of workers in the field of marketing and agriculture."

In turn, it adds, the project will not only be answering a part of the unemployment problem, but will aid agricultural advancement in the region as well.

Thyme is easy to cultivate, growing in almost every kind of soil and able to withstand temperatures ranging from summer heat to frosts. Its roots are also able to resist dryness.

The Ministry of Agriculture will provide assistance in planting, cultivation, irrigation, grass and weed elimination, fertilisation as well as a drying process for the herb to avoid wastage and decay, said the statement.

Among those in attendance at the signing ceremony were: Sudanese Ambassador Abdul Rahman Numeiri, former Minister of Social Development Mohammad Sqour, Dr. Osman Hashem, resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), representatives of the Crown Prince's Office and the Ministry of Social Development.

ISRA, an international voluntary organisation, was founded in 1981 as the Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA) in Sudan. Today in Africa the agency is still known as IARA, but this section now comes under the umbrella of ISRA in its international network.

The agency was founded by Sudanese doctors who had been involved with refugees and displaced persons as a result of civil conflict in Sudan during the 1970s.

It is registered with the U.N. in New York Geneva and Vienna and is also a member of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).

Having begun with one small office in Khartoum 14 years ago, ISRA now boasts 29 offices worldwide.

"It (the project) is very honourable ... and I am pleased the Japanese people can be helpful," Mr. Ikeda said at the ceremony.

A balancing point between divergent styles

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The theme which Rula Shukairy so singularly and exclusively focuses on in her current exhibit of roughly 50 paintings is not a new one, internationally speaking. For over a century, the barren and thoroughly biblical-looking wastelands of rock and mountain which engulf Jordan and the rest of the Middle East have long fascinated foreign eyes, and been a frequent staple for artists from outside who come to visit.

But for the native artists of the region who are Ms. Shukairy's counterparts, these Arabian rockscapes have usually seemed to exert markedly less pull — they have dealt with them not only more infrequently, but in a significantly more subdued manner as well.

Ms. Shukairy says that in her work, however, such scenery is a constant preoccupation. "When I see the earth unchanged," she explained, "unplayed with by modern civilisation, I feel somehow more relaxed, more free."

Cross-cultural comparison can be a hazy, convoluted, and often controversial undertaking. But it is intriguing to put Ms. Shukairy's works now on display at the French Cultural Centre alongside those of a foreign counterpart who recently came to Amman with an exhibit in a partially similar vein.

That is Dutch artist Gertie Bierenbroodspot, who spent months amidst the wilderness and ruins around Petra, and then displayed the results at the Royal Cultural Centre last December.

What is quickly noticed on first observation is that Ms. Shukairy's works, delicately half-abstract and half-impressionist, lack the immediate kinetic impact of Ms. Bierenbroodspot's. The latter's renderings stun in a way that Ms. Shukairy's do not, because she so vividly conveys her awe-struck sense of first discovery and revelation amongst terrain which was for her, an outsider, a singularly unordinary and otherworldly place.

The situation of Ms. Shukairy, as a native artist, could not be more difficult — these stones, cliffsides, caves and ruins of Jordan do not present any stunning novelties for her, as they did for Ms. Bierenbroodspot — they are, indeed, a conventional familiarity of her environment.

For even if Ms. Shukairy is a city dweller, the landscapes are such an integral part of so many reaches of Jordan that they have nonetheless, since long ago, found their way into her upbringing, her experiences and her memory.

It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that whereas Ms. Bierenbroodspot's method was to plan and sketch the outline of all her renderings while she was sitting on the spot in front of each particular subject in Petra, Ms. Shukairy's works customarily do not even depict any specific site.

Although the caves, ruins, cliffs, etc. which meet the viewer's eye thoroughly correspond to the terrain of this country in all of their features and aspects, they are the caves, ruins, and cliffs of Ms. Shukairy's memory and imagination alone, painted while she sits in her studio in Amman, far removed from where their physical counterparts actually lie. "I never plan that I will just sit and do any particular painting," said Ms. Shukairy, explaining just how thoroughly freerform her approach has become. "I have to have a mood, and then something strong will push me to do it, usually after midnight."

In the end, although Ms. Shukairy's evocations of desert rocks and ruins lack the majestic blast of grandeur that Ms. Bierenbroodspot's Petra renderings, this turns out to be more of a balancing point between divergent styles, rather than a negative or positive one.

Whereas the desertscapes of Jordan proudly revealed the fire and thunder of first creation and discovery to Ms. Bierenbroodspot, they de-

veloped quieter, subtler and more intimate forms of communication to capture Ms. Shukairy as her paintings bear witness.

There is one final point — another, very quiet voice which Ms. Shukairy believed was occasionally trying to poke through in her paintings.

She hesitated to explain it fully — not only because the concept is so vague but also, perhaps, because of an awareness that such notions can come across as rather pretentious if put in too strong a way. Although Ms. Shukairy is of Palestinian descent, she said, she has lived all her life in Lebanon and then Amman, and quite comfortably so. "But sometimes, I have this funny feeling that I am trying to imagine landscapes in another country — one that I have never seen or known."

The exhibit, which opened on March 11 under the patronage of Abdul Majeed Shoman, continues until April 4.

South Korea offers North olive branch as nuclear deal wavers

SEOUL (Agencies) — South Korea pledged Friday to press ahead with plans to do business with the Communist North despite a simmering and potentially damaging row over Pyongyang's Unification Minister Rha Woong-Bae said Southern businesses should press ahead with bids to forge contacts with the North, despite frosty inter-Korean diplomatic relations.

"Private-level South-North economic exchanges... will be promoted steadily despite the North's double-edged attitude," Mr. Rha told parliament.

Shortly after his conciliatory speech, Pyongyang responded with a hardline statement accusing Washington and Seoul of working together to scupper a U.S.-North Korean deal over nuclear technology.

An uncorroborated report carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Washington had committed an "impardonable insult" in insisting the North accept nuclear reactors made in the South as part of the pact they

signed last October.

"This... clearly indicates the United States is openly seeking confrontation with the Democratic People's Republic of (North) Korea, going against the spirit of the DPRK-U.S. agreement," said the report, monitored in Tokyo.

Further adding to the inter-Korean gloom, Seoul's Defence Ministry reported to parliament that the North Korean Air Force was currently staging its biggest war rehearsal since 1991.

The ministry reported said Pyongyang's airborne exercises included air strikes by tactical fighters, night flights by low-flying aircraft, bombing and troop landing drills and night-time combat rehearsals.

Analysts in Seoul also mused over recent promotions in the North Korean military, believed to be the key factor in ensuring the power base of de facto leader Kim Jong-Il. The younger Kim has been in charge since his father Kim Il-Sung died last July.

The recent elevation of four generals to North Korea's Communist Party Central Military Commission did not herald an imminent shake-up of its ruling elite, the analysts said.

Their elevation followed frequent visits by Kim Jong-Il to military bases in recent weeks. Experts in Seoul said the visits were aimed at consolidating his grip on the military.

"The appointments appear to be a feeler see the response from other members in the army," said Park Hun-Ok, senior fellow at the Institute of North Korea Studies.

South Korea has been hoping for closer exchanges with the North following the deal last October between Washington and Pyongyang under which the North said it would dismantle its nuclear programme in exchange for safer light-water reactors supplied from, and financed by, the West.

But the North has put the whole deal in doubt by refusing to accept one of its basic elements — that the reactors are South Korean-made.

Under the accord, North Korea would freeze a nuclear programme suspected of being capable of developing a nuclear arsenal in return for light-water reactors and alternative energy supplies.

Mr. Rha said Seoul was considering "a variety of measures" in case the North pulls out of the deal.

"The coming six months are very important to future inter-Korean relations whether or not a reactor supply contract will be concluded," he said.

In another KCNA report Friday, North Korea said it had proposed a meeting with a South Korean dissident group in a third country to arrange joint celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan on Aug. 15.

KCNA said the proposal was made by a spokesman of North Korea's committee preparing the celebrations.



Cuban President Fidel Castro visits the Place Vendôme in Paris. A row grew in France over a visit by Mr. Castro, with politicians denouncing him as a dictator and protesting the red carpet welcome granted him by President Francois Mitterrand. He left for Havana Thursday (AFP photo)

Castro savours a day in French country

CHABLIS, France (AP) — Fidel Castro, slightly buzzed from vintage Chardonnay, emerged from a cellar with the bright colours of a wine-maker's knighthood on his olive green tunic.

"I like it here," Mr. Castro said, after a madcap ride through the backroads of Burgundy, the last fling of a European trip that effectively took Cuba out of its diplomatic isolation.

"I don't know what my

visit to Europe did for Cuba," an ebullient Castro told the Associated Press before leaving, "but it did a lot for me. My strongest impression? Chablis wine."

He came to visit Gerard Bourgoin, a French poultry mogul who went to Cuba in 1992 to sell chickens and befriended Mr. Castro by serving him chilled Chablis along with ham he had brought from home.

After addressing the poverty summit in Copenhagen, lunching with French President Francois Mitterrand and speaking to UNESCO in Paris, Mr. Castro came to see how Bourgoin slaughtered chickens.

Then, in a motorcade of flashing lights and discreetly hidden firearms, Mr. Castro was taken 30 miles (55 kms) across rolling farmland, through old stone villages, to the vineyards of Chablis.

Dinosaur egg craze grips China

BEIJING (R) — Avid collectors identify them with a lick of the tongue. They are fossilised dinosaur eggs, the latest craze in China, where collectors are numerous and smuggling rampant, officials said Friday. The fad has led to the discovery by Chinese researchers of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) in one such egg, a find Chinese scientists hailed this week as a major advance for mankind that could add fact to the fictional hit movie Jurassic Park, in which dinosaurs were brought back to life. "History has given China a chance for a breakthrough in science," lead scientist Professor Chen Zhenxiang told the Guangming Daily. The egg that supplied this week's breakthrough was found by a collector in Xixia County in Henan province in central China, a veritable mine of fossil nests and a centre for treasure hunters, a local official said by telephone. "We have a higher concentration of eggs as well as more varieties than other places and they are better preserved," the secretary of Xixia's government office told Reuters. Dinosaur eggs were first found in Xixia in 1993, he said. "The nests cover 80 square kilometres and we have found 5,000 fossils," he said. The discovery has brought problems, he said, but a campaign launched in 1994 by the dinosaur egg protection leading group to prevent theft and smuggling has yielded results.

Silence is golden

VAEXJOE, Sweden (AP) — No talking, no television, no radio, no mail, no newspapers. For 33 days, 40 people will live together in total silence for a meditation seminar in Sweden, the daily Smaalandposten said. The participants, aged 17 to 56 and hailing from the United States, Britain and Scandinavia, will gather in the small southern village of Hammeda to attain "pure consciousness" and "preserve their internal concentration" through transcendental meditation and yoga, the newspaper said. Using only gestures, facial expressions and body language to communicate for the month, the group will then be allowed to talk to their heart's content for the remaining two months of the course.

Madness Of King George bulletin sold for \$920

LONDON (AP) — Some things — like a monarch's madness — are better kept at home. A British collector paid nearly four times the projected price for an anxious 1810 bulletin announcing King George III's final descent into madness, because he wanted it to remain in England, Phillips Auctioneers said. King George III suffered from a disease doctors now believe to be porphyria, which subjects sufferers to momentary bouts of insanity. One such bout in 1788 — precipitating Britain's regency crisis — is the subject of the current film, "The Madness Of King George." Nigel Hawthorne, who plays the king, has been nominated for a best actor Oscar this year. King George recovered in 1789. But a relapse 21 years later prompted the bulletin, which was put up for sale Thursday by an anonymous seller. The bulletin, headed "Most secret," begins, "The King continues as he has ever. The gradual increase of his irritation, without fever, which is the worst of all symptoms," and concludes: "He is most ungovernable and violent." Phillips said the bulletin appears to have been addressed to the Marquess of Buckingham, a privy councillor and one of the king's closest advisors, and written by William Henry Freemantle. Buckingham thwarted the king's enemies from passing the regency on his son, the Prince of Wales, in 1789. But by 1810, the king's madness was deemed irreversible. The bulletin is dated Nov. 1; by Nov. 6 the king's physician, Robert Willis, had him straitjacketed. The regency was passed to the Prince of Wales in 1811. George III lived another 10 years, and his son was crowned George IV in 1820. The auction house had set a range of between £100-150 (\$160 to \$240) for the bulletin. It was sold for £575 (\$920) to "an anonymous English collector, who decided he wanted such a special piece of English history to stay in the country," according to a Phillips statement.

Blast rocks Greek TV station

ATHENS (AP) — An explosion, possibly from an anti-tank missile, rocked the premises of Greece's private Mega Channel television station during a news bulletin Wednesday night, causing damage but no injuries.

The blast occurred at 8:50 p.m. (1850 GMT), the station announced. It broadcast footage of a hole in the wall of a second-floor office belonging to journalist and producer Pavlos Tsismas.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Mega Channel, one of the country's two largest stations, is located in the Athens suburb of Pnaia. Mr. Tsismas produces a weekly talk show. His office was vacant at the time.

"There was no warning before the attack, we could

Cambodian leaders: Rebels almost crushed

PARIS (AP) — Cambodia's two prime ministers said Thursday the government had virtually crushed the Khmer Rouge, reducing them to a band of rebels and freeing authorities to tackle reconstruction after decades of war.

Donor nations, in a display of confidence despite allegations of corruption and human rights abuse, gave Cambodia a "good grade" with pledges equaling \$1.35 billion over two years.

"There are no conditions attached," said Prince Norodom Ranariddh, first prime minister. "This is more than a plebiscite."

British war heroine Odette dies

LONDON (R) — Odette Hallows, one of Britain's most famous military heroines, has died quietly at home after a life of intrigue, gallantry and torture in which she came to epitomise allied resistance to fascism.

Odette died Monday at the age of 82 but family members requested that her death be kept quiet until after a private funeral, which was held this week on the outskirts of London.

Immortalised in film as the very model of female courage, Odette worked as an agent alongside the French resistance during World War II, although her actual value was later challenged.

She was tortured by the Gestapo after being captured in 1943, but never buckled. The Gestapo seared her back with a red-hot poker and pulled out all her toe-nails, but French born Odette refused to name two other British agents.

In 1946 she became the first woman to be awarded the George Cross, Britain's highest civilian medal for gallantry, and a year later she married the man who had been her commanding officer in France, Peter Churchill.

China promotes 2 to top power ranks, strengthening Jiang Zemin

BEIJING (AP) — Two new vice premiers joined China's government Friday, a move expected to strengthen President Jiang Zemin's power.

The National People's Congress approved the appointments of Wu Bangguo and Jiang Chunyun as vice premiers of the State Council, the highest governing body.

Mr. Wu is a former Communist Party leader in Shanghai, an important power base of President and Communist Party Secretary Jiang Zemin.

Mr. Wu is expected to take charge of industry and reform of state-owned enterprises, and Mr. Jiang Chunyun will likely oversee agriculture. Western diplomats and Hong Kong press reports said.

Both of these crucial sectors are facing difficult economic reforms. Diplomats said the government was showing the importance it placed on these reforms by appointing vice premiers to handle them on a day-to-day basis.

The promotions were expected to strengthen President Jiang as the influence of senior leader Deng Xiaoping wanes.

Mr. Deng, 90, is believed to be in failing health, and Chinese leaders say Mr. Jiang is the core of a new generation of leaders that is firmly in control.

The rubber-stamp legislature approved the promotions within the first 10 minutes of its session. But many delegates murmured when results showed more than one-third did not vote for Mr. Jiang Chunyun.

Prince Ranariddh and Mr. Hun Sen, second prime minister, spoke at a news conference a day after the close of the two-day conference on the reconstruction of Cambodia.

It was the first joint news conference of the two leaders since the October 1991 signing of the Paris peace treaty ending more than two decades of war. The treaty set in motion the United Nations' biggest operation to move the country to democracy.

Lord Lovat, Scottish war hero, dies at 83

8BEAULY, Scotland (AP) — World War II hero Lord Lovat, who led his commando unit onto the Normandy beaches while his personal bagpipers played, died Thursday at his home in the Scottish highlands. He was 83.

Lord Lovat, described by Winston Churchill as "the handsomest man who ever cut a throat," was one of Britain's most illustrious soldiers, honoured with the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and Military Cross (MC), as well as the Croix de Guerre and the Norwegian Cross.

Simon Christopher Joseph Fraser Lovat, the 17th Baron and 24th chief of the clan Fraser of Lovat, died "very peacefully," a family spokesman said. He lived at Balbir House, near Beaufort Castle, the family seat at Beaulieu since 1511, 10 miles (16 km) west of Inverness. He had given the "he and ancient family estate to his heir in 1965.

A year ago, Lord Lovat's eldest and youngest sons died within eight days of each other. His heir Simon, 54-year-old Master of Lovat, died of a heart attack during a hunt at the castle. Andrew, 42, was killed in a safari accident in Tanzania.

Lord Lovat, ill and frail, was unable to attend their funeral. His title passes to grandson Simon Fraser, an 18-year-old student.

At the beginning of World War II, Lord Lovat became captain of the Lovat Scouts, a Scottish unit created by his family to fight in the Boer War at the turn of the century. Then he led the 1st Special Service (commando) Brigade, ordering his pipers to play Highland Laddie, Blue Bonnets Over The Border and Road To The Isles, as the commandos stormed German shoreline defences on Sword Beach on D-Day, 1944.

U.S. State Department opposes consolidation of foreign affairs agencies

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The State Department has voiced strong opposition to a proposal by Senator Jesse Helms to consolidate the department with the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

"We reject the notion that consolidation equals reform," acting spokesman David Johnson told a news briefing. "We believe that the missions of arms control, public diplomacy, and sustainable development and humanitarian assistance are essential elements in the conduct of foreign policy. And they are best carried out by independent agencies operating in close coordination with the State Department and under the overall foreign policy guidance of the secretary of state."

Mr. Johnson said the department believes that "any attempt to consolidate all of these agencies right now would interrupt the conduct of foreign affairs. We believe that the secretary and the president need the tools that they have at their disposal now to pursue our interests and to pursue broad engagement around the world."

Sen. Helms urged such consolidation at a Capitol Hill news conference earlier in the day. Last month, Sen. Helms cautioned Secretary of State Warren Christopher at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he would pursue plans for consolidating the four foreign affairs agencies.

At his press conference, Sen. Helms contended his reorganisation plan is essentially the same one put forward by Mr. Christopher when his views were solicited by the vice president.

But the acting secretary told reporters, "This is not the secretary's plan, by no means. When the vice president asked shortly after the first of the year, in the beginning of the phase two of the National Performance Review, to think of some different ways to approach things, we considered various options. We considered them carefully, and we found them wanting."

"We found that the best way to pursue the foreign policy objectives of the administration and the protection of American interests abroad was through reinvention of the foreign affairs agencies as currently and the maintenance of the independence of those four agencies."

The State Department believes that the administration's foreign affairs reinvention efforts have already resulted in the savings of millions of dollars, Mr. Johnson said. "This is the beginning of a rather lengthy process," he said. "We will see where things go."

Responding to questions, the acting spokesman said: "We've found the independence of USIA in working abroad and developing exchanges broadly for the American government and organising the American government's broad-based relations with independent leadership that projects America's voice abroad has been helpful in our foreign policy efforts. And we believe it's a tool that should remain at the disposal of the president and the secretary of state in continuing to pursue American engagement abroad."

The individuals who head the various foreign affairs agencies "operate under the leadership of the secretary of state, but they're not a corporate component of the Department of State," he explained. "And we have believed and continue to believe that the type of independence that they have as organisational structures has helped maintain the tools of foreign policy at our disposal that we need to pursue the interest of America abroad, including broad engagement on foreign policy issues with foreign publics."

Asked why USAID should remain independent, Mr. Johnson replied: "Because we believe that the organisational structure that they bring, the expertise which they bring, has enabled us to have a broad foreign assistance plan which pursues development and brings economies and countries to a point where they can become self-sustaining, and we believe that the structure which they currently have and which they've had over several years is the one which can help us best do that in the future."

"We believe that the independence that it has, the independent voice it brings to development, in coordination with the Department of State in pursuit of overall foreign affairs and foreign policy interests of the United States has been the most effective way to pursue those interests. And we believe that independent voice should be preserved and enhanced."

On ACDA, Mr. Johnson said: "I don't think anyone would argue that arms control has ceased to be an issue in American foreign policy and an interest for America that needs to be pursued vigorously. In fact, one could argue, and I would, that it's become much more important as we've moved away from simply direct bilateral interests in arms control with what was the former Soviet Union to broader multilateral interests and issues, including non-proliferation."

The pre-dawn execution sparked fresh protests in Manila with one women's group vowing to disrupt next month's visit to the Philippines by Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong.

A Communist death squad has also threatened to retaliate against Singaporeans and the island state government.

The Singapore government said Friday its embassy in Manila had received threats ahead of the execution.

However, Singapore had no plans to withdraw dependents of diplomats based in Manila, a Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman said.

Singapore's relations with the Philippines would also not be affected by the hanging, she added. Both countries are fellow members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Contemplation, 42, was given the death sentence after her conviction for strangling another maid and drowning the son of the victim's employers on May 4, 1991.

Security was unusually tight at the entrance to Changi Prison where the execution took place, according to reporters who had been present for previous Singapore death watches. The entrance is as close as outsiders are allowed during a hanging.

Several police officers were outside the gates on patrol, and others, some wearing bullet-proof vests and carrying automatic rifles could be seen just in side. Police dogs were also on hand.

In the Philippines, there were expressions of outrage as well as grief.

Liza Masa, head of a

Singapore hanging sparks fresh protest in Manila

SINGAPORE (R) — Singapore hanged Filipina maid Flor Contemplacion for double murder Friday after rejecting an appeal from Philippines President Fidel Ramos and an 11th-hour plea by her lawyers.

The pre-dawn execution sparked fresh protests in Manila with one women's group vowing to disrupt next month's visit to the Philippines by Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong.

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National Leftist Women's group, said protesters would disrupt Prime Minister Goh's visit to Manila next month.

"We are going to hound him. He will be sorry he ever came here," Ms. Masa of the Gabriela Group told reporters.

In the days before Contemplacion's execution, claims she was innocent emerged, there were public protests by human rights groups and others, and overnight 2,000 people attended a prayer vigil at the Singapore embassy, police said.

But Singapore academics said they did not see the episode having an adverse impact on bilateral ties. Singapore has large investments in Philippines in shipping and energy-related projects.

In rejecting the appeal from President Ramos for a stay of execution, the Singapore government said it had

made a detailed rebuttal of some of the alleged new evidence in the case.

A police statement announcing the hanging Friday said: "Contemplacion had admitted to both the murders to the police investigators and at all stages of the proceedings."

She had "led police to recover valuables and jewellery" belonging to the strangled maid, the statement said.

Singapore has generally shown little inclination to give in to protests over its justice system, which includes death not just for murder but for certain other offences like drug trafficking. It also inflicts caning for a number of crimes.

Contemplacion's execution was one of four Friday. Three drug traffickers were also hanged in Singapore, bringing to over 100 the number executed under its drug laws since 1975.

Ukraine ban

Bosnia, I

World News

Chirac passes EU test in French presidency race

PARIS (Agencies) — Conservative Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, favourite for the presidency, has cleared a major hurdle by rallying his divided camp behind a new-found enthusiasm for European Union (EU), analysts said Friday.

Mr. Chirac may have defused Europe as an issue in the April-May election by staking out positions similar to those of his two closest rivals, Socialist Lionel Jospin and fellow Gaullist Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.

Political analyst Alain Duhamel said on Europe 1 radio that Europe was the last big test for Mr. Chirac before the first round of the presidential election on April 23 and he had successfully shown himself a pragmatist with coherent policies.



Conservative presidential candidate Jacques Chirac shakes hands with supporters during an campaign meeting at Meaux. The French presidential elections first round will be held April 23, followed by the second round two weeks later (AFP photo)

Carlo interview Friday. An opinion poll published in the daily *Informa* Friday indicated that Mr. Chirac, twice prime minister and twice a failed presidential candidate, would win 28 per cent of the vote in the first round, trailed by Mr. Jospin on 21 and Mr. Balladur with just 16.

The poll suggested Mr. Chirac could crush either man when the top two candidates go through to the runoff on May 7. Political analyst Philippe Alexandre said on RTL Radio that Mr. Chirac had turned Europe from a potential handicap into an advantage by seeking out the advice of pro-European centrist including former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

slide in the polls from a position of runaway front-runner. "I have been favourite for many months," he told the conservative daily *Le Figaro*. "The situation has been inverted for the past two weeks. It can turn around again. I will do everything to achieve that."

Europe had seemed likely to haunt the campaign. Voters approved the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 by a wafer-thin 51-49 per cent margin. But the strongest potential supporters of European Union, including former European Commission President Jacques Delors, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing and former Prime Minister Raymond Barre, have decided not to stand, shifting debate to a more moderate trio.

Meanwhile Brice Lalonde, one of three ecology candidates in forthcoming elections for the French presidency, said Wednesday he was withdrawing from the race to reduce splits in the ecologist vote.

other green candidates Antoine Waechter and Dominique Voynet to step down, but had failed and was therefore withdrawing himself.

"Three candidates standing on the ecologist ticket would assassinate ecology and would put environmental politics in peril," he said in a statement issued to AFP.

On French Television he said: "I am withdrawing because the battle is so important, and it should not be weakened... I have been trying for three months to persuade them to withdraw, but unfortunately I have not been heard."

Political turmoil grips Italy day after Dini win

ROME (R) — A lacerating split in the centrist Popular Party (PPI) brought fresh political turmoil to Italy Friday and put another question mark over Prime Minister Lamberto Dini's chances of survival.

Its division into two camps, which some analysts believe could tip the balance of power in parliament against Mr. Dini, drove home the deep political uncertainty that helped send the lira skidding to yet another record low against the German mark.

Romano Prodi, a Catholic economist building a centre-left pact to challenge former Prime Minister Berlusconi in a general election expected some time this year.

The small PPI has until now solidly supported Mr. Dini and his stop-gap technocrat government, installed two months ago from outside the country's hung parliament.

fano Folli, writing in *Corriere Della Sera* newspaper, said the confidence vote result had shown parliament "split down the middle."

"The Freedom Alliance lost but it's hard to say who won... if the nine or 10 pro-Berlusconi deputies... side with the right, the balance of power would be overturned, again by a handful of votes," Mr. Folli said.

ly state pensions system. Market doubts that he would survive long enough to enact the crucial reform, or obtain the hard-left votes for what could be a society painful measure, helped trigger the lira's plunge against the mighty German mark Friday.

It fell through successive lows to hit 1,254.00/7.00 against the mark at around 1300 GMT. "Investors simply have no more confidence in Italy... the situation is drastic," a Milan-based dealer said.

Ukraine bans constitution in separatist Crimea

KIEV (R) — Ukraine's parliament abolished the constitution of its autonomous Crimean Peninsula Friday after President Leonid Kuchma urged members to take action against pro-Russian separatism.

Deputies voted 246 to 55 to outlaw a 1992 constitution which authorities in Kiev viewed as a bid to break away from post-Soviet Ukraine.

Yuri Meshkov "in view of gross violations of Ukraine's constitution and laws." His job was abolished.

It was Ukraine's first major punitive action against Crimea in three years of trying to contain the drive by its ethnic Russian majority to move closer to Moscow. But deputies stopped short of abolishing Crimea's autonomous status or parliament.

fore of your actions," Mr. Kuchma said, gesturing to the chairman of the Crimean parliament sitting in the chamber.

"If Ukraine's parliament and president continue to take no action, there could be unpredictable events... we are witnesses to events in the former Soviet Union which occurred because no one took timely action."

former Soviet republics, the two latest examples being Russia's campaign to quash a separatist revolt in Chechnya and President Nursultan Nazarbayev's dissolution of parliament in Kazakhstan.

Two-thirds of Crimea's 2.7 million residents are ethnic Russians and since the collapse of the former Soviet Union, many politicians have done little to conceal their aim of restoring Russian rule over the Peninsula.

Yugoslavia, Russia, Mediterranean top EU menu

PARIS (R) — European Union (EU) foreign ministers will assess increasingly desperate efforts to avert a new war in former Yugoslavia and discuss a long-term policy for stabilising the Mediterranean region at informal talks this weekend.

They will also review Russia's troubled relations with the EU, stalled due to European concern over a rough military crackdown on rebel Chechnya, diplomats said.

head off renewed fighting in the Balkans, French officials said.

The alternative, they said, is a "disaster scenario" in which renewed fighting in the spring might spread beyond Bosnia and lead to the withdrawal of U.N. peacekeepers.

endorsed by the five-power contact group, if a new war is to be averted when a four-month ceasefire in Bosnia expires at the end of April.

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe will have opportunities to discuss the peace effort with both Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher next week, when there could be a ministerial meeting of the contact group, diplomats said.

On Russia, British officials said the ministers would discuss whether to move ahead with a partnership agreement with Moscow, frozen over Chechnya, when they next meet formally on April 10, as well as Moscow's relations with NATO and the Western European Union in Europe's future security architecture.

Scandinavian EU members Denmark and Sweden are expected to be the most sceptical that Russia has done enough to merit this, they said. No decision is expected this weekend.

Azerbaijani troops crush 'coup-plot' police revolt

BAKU (Agencies) — Troops in Azerbaijan Friday crushed a coup attempt by rebel police units aimed at seizing and killing President Heydar Aliyev, the government said.

Deputy Interior Minister Rovshan Javadov, who led the mutiny, was killed in a battle when troops attacked hundreds of insurgent police, Azeri authorities said.

Mr. Aliyev, 71, a former Soviet politburo member who has been in power since June 1993, said in a sombre address to the nation: "There are numerous casualties on both sides."

National Security Minister Namig Abbasov told a cabinet meeting that Mr. Javadov had plotted a coup because he wanted to be interior minister of the Transcaucasian state, the third biggest oil producer of the former Soviet Republics.

Mr. Javadov, who led the OPM mutiny, was wounded during several hours of fierce fighting and later died in hospital, Azeri officials said.

rooftops of nearby apartment buildings made several attempts to take the base, eight kilometres north of Baku.

But they met fierce resistance from up to 700 heavily-armed rebel OPM forces. The OPM forces rebelled Monday in a power struggle when some of their members seized administrative buildings in the north of Azerbaijan, a country of seven million people neighbouring Iran, southern Russia and the Caspian Sea.

Interior Minister Ramil Usubov ordered the OPM, whose total force comprises 3,000 men, to disband and Mr. Aliyev said the country was on the verge of civil war.

Mr. Javadov had met local journalists Thursday, one of whom told Reuters that Mr. Javadov was ready for compromise but would not drop demands for Mr. Aliyev to resign.

Mr. Aliyev is trying to bring stability to his country, which has been on the losing end of a war against ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh region and lies in the stormy Caucasus region. Restoring calm became vital after Azerbaijan signed a \$7.4 billion deal with Western oil companies last year to develop rich oil fields in the Caspian Sea.

Last October, Mr. Aliyev declared a state of emergency after OPM police held Azerbaijan's prosecutor general hostage for several hours. Mr. Aliyev described the seizure then as an attempted coup and accused Mr. Javadov of being involved.

of people Friday in the aftermath of crushing the alleged coup attempt.

Mr. Usubov said the rebels' base was "destroyed, dozens of people have been arrested, and the search has begun for those hiding." Interfax News Agency reported.

All those who fled "will eventually be found and arrested," Mr. Usubov said. Mr. Aliyev said four government soldiers had been killed and an unspecified number of rebels and civilians caught in the cross fire.

Rasul Guliyev, speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament, said that "dozens of young people were killed and wounded."

The security minister, Namik Abbasov, claimed that ex-President Ayaz Mutalibov and ex-Prime Minister Surat Guseinov were linked to the coup attempt and had planned to fly to Baku from exile in Moscow.

In three years of chronic political instability, Azerbaijan has seen as many presidents, a series of coup attempts and an armed conflict with Armenian separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Faced with so many political problems, the former Soviet republic which became independent at the end of 1991 after the country's first free elections brought President Ayaz Mutalibov to power, has been plagued with economic stagnation.

Nagorno-Karabakh has, more than anything, ruined the nation's economy.

The conflict, which cost more than 20,000 lives and left hundreds of thousands of refugees between February 1988 and May 1994, when a fragile ceasefire came into force, has also forged the conditions for internal political disorder.

By May 1992, less than a year after his election, Mr. Mutalibov was overthrown by the Islamic-inspired and pro-Turkish Azerbaijan Popular Front (APF) led by Abulfaz Elchibey, who became the new head of state a month later.

Mr. Mutalibov, accused by the APF of being a pro-Russian Communist agent, took refuge in Moscow and has remained there ever since.

A year later, an armed insurrection broke out in Baku in support of Surat Guseinov, a 34-year-old colonel controlling the country's second city, Gandzha.

Several months earlier, Mr. Elchibey had sacked Mr. Guseinov from his post as commander of troops in Nagorno-Karabakh after a series of military reverses.

The insurrection, reportedly supported by Moscow, led to the return to power a few weeks later of Geidar Aliyev, who served as Communist Party first secretary between 1969 and 1983.

Mr. Aliyev ruled the country with an iron grip, muzzling the APF and the opposition press.

Last October, after agreeing "the deal of the century" with a consortium of foreign petroleum companies, he sacked Mr. Guseinov, by this time prime minister, whom he accused of attempting a coup d'etat with the support of several senior officials.

Night time Russian airstrikes signal 'new stage'

ARGUN, Russia (AFP) — A series of night time airstrikes in Chechnya signal a "new stage" in Russian tactics along the front south of Grozny, a top Chechen commander said here Friday.

"During the day you can see what you are aiming at... Now they just want to bomb everything under the sun," Aslambek Ismailov, commander of Chechen separatist forces defending the town of Argun told AFP.

"What other reason is there to bomb at night? he added.

Russian bombs hit targets near Argun and Shali overnight, where Russian and Chechen forces are separated by the Argun River. The night time airstrikes began at this front Wednesday night.

Commander Ismailov said that there had been a precedent for night time bombing at Argun several weeks ago, but residents of Shali said that it was the first time that night time airstrikes occurred in their part of the front.

Chechen secessionist forces driven out of Grozny by the Russians now consider Shali as their capital.

So far, the night time strikes seem to have been concentrated on military positions, although unconfirmed reports said bombs had hit civilian targets at Gudermes.

Russian planes bombed civilian targets in a daytime raid on the village of Avturi earlier this week.

Chechen fighters holding a position outside Shali said that bombs were dropped in the field alongside the road leading into the town from the west, where fighting has raged since Monday.

Adams: Irish peace talks move closer

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Sinn Fein and the British government have moved a step closer to ministerial level talks with an agreement to discuss the agenda for such a meeting Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams said here Friday.

"I am pleased to announce we have moved to a discussion of the agendas for meetings between Sinn Fein and British ministers," Mr. Adams told a press conference.

"These meetings will take place sooner rather than later. This is my conviction," he added.

Asked how soon this would be, Mr. Adams said "within the next few weeks."

The announcement came a day after Mr. Adams shook hands with President Bill Clinton, the highlight so far of a high profile visit during which Mr. Adams has received the full VIP treatment.

Mr. Adams said it was time for Britain to take a leaf out of Mr. Clinton's book and treat Sinn Fein like any other political party in Northern Ireland.

"Every party must be granted equity of treatment here in the USA," Mr. Adams said.

Mr. Adams also reiterated charges that British agents were responsible for planting an explosive device defused overnight near the Irish border.

Asked who was responsible, Mr. Adams said "obviously an element of British dirty tricks."

He said it was hardly likely that the IRA would have chosen the day after he shook hands with Mr. Clinton to violate a six-month-old ceasefire.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA), which declared a ceasefire in September in its campaign to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, denied Friday that it placed a bomb in the Northern Ireland town of Newry.

The attack was thwarted by British security force Thursday evening, but the IRA said none of its members was involved in planting the device some five miles (eight kilometres) from the border with the Irish Republic.

Britain said the high-explosive incendiary bomb, which partially exploded as it was being defused in a do-it-yourself store, resembled a type "that has been used in the past by Republican groups."

In a statement to a Dublin radio station, the guerrillas said: "This incident was clearly the work of our opponents and it is aimed at derailing the peace process, the success of which we in the IRA are firmly committed to."

Protestant politicians representing Northern Ireland's majority population who support union with Britain said

two carbon copy bomb incidents over the past four months were the work of the IRA or Republican mavericks.

The IRA issued statements dismissing those charges, too. A police spokesman said the Newry bomb, which was discovered after two telephoned anonymous warnings, consisted of one kilogramme (two lb.) of Semtex high explosive linked to two litres (half a gallon) of petrol, in a bag left inside the store.

"It was certainly designed to explode," the spokesman said.

The IRA often used Semtex to devastating effect in its 25-year war against British rule. Like the IRA, Protestant loyalist guerrillas, who called a matching truce in October in their campaign to safeguard British links, asserts it is too early to part with weapons.

Britain said the Newry bomb proved the need for guerrillas on all sides to hand in their weapons to seal a fragile peace.

"The device was clearly intended to cause maximum destruction," Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew said in a statement.

Mr. Adams told Sky News Television from Washington: "I think that those who have been involved in this may be closer to Mr. Mayhew than they are to any Republican element."

Mexican rebels are ready for talks

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (R) — Indigenous Maya guerrillas in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas said they are ready to renew direct talks with the Mexican government but federal troops must first withdraw from positions occupied in a recent military advance.

The rebels said in a statement late Thursday that they had renewed contact with the government by letter and were ready for direct meetings with interior ministry representatives "when physical conditions exist — this includes the federal army's return to its positions on Feb. 8."

The Interior Ministry said it welcomed the announcement by the self-styled Zapatista National Liberation Army.

"We consider this positive," a ministry spokesman said, adding that the government believed renewed contact by letter would enable the two sides to overcome remaining differences and restart peace talks.

He gave no date for when

negotiations might resume.

The rebel communiqué, dated March 11 but released to journalists Thursday, was a reply to a law passed by the Mexican Congress last week aimed at creating the conditions for new talks.

The law contained provisions for an amnesty for rebels wishing to lay down their arms and authorised the establishment of a demilitarised zone where talks could take place.

The Mexican army and police advanced last month into large parts of Chiapas previously under rebel control after President Ernesto Zedillo ordered the arrest of Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos and other top rebels, accusing them of planning further attacks across Mexico.

The rebels withdraw deep into their Lacandon Jungle stronghold, taking with them many civilian supporters who feared the army advance.

week once the rebels had melted back into the jungle.

The law last week formally suspended the arrest orders against Marcos and the other leaders for 30 days.

In their statement Thursday, the rebels acknowledged the efforts of legislators to create conditions for peace talks but said the law contained "serious omissions which could be used by the army to impose insulting conditions in the talks or to carry out its militarist police plans."

The Zedillo government earlier this week ordered army troops to withdraw to the outskirts of villages in the conflict zone which they occupied during the February military advance, but said they would remain in the area.

The Zapatista National Liberation Army rose up in arms on Jan. 1, 1994 to demand greater democracy and indigenous rights. Some 150 people died in a week of fighting but barely a shot has been fired since then.

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For the sake of the ecosystem

THE CONFLICT between Canada and the European Union over Spain's fishing rights in international waters off Canada's Newfoundland's coast has implications for other countries with or without fishing fleets. At issue is the present lacuna in international law about the regime that should govern not only fishing but other practices in high seas. The Law of the Sea Convention that was negotiated and adopted more than 15 years ago left much of the activities in international waters unregulated. In effect the law of the jungle applies in greater portions of the earth's surface with countries practically free to fish as they want leading damages to the seas' ecosystem. This hiatus in international law has led to the present standoff between Europe and Canada with increasing prospects that the tension could escalate into an armed conflict. Canada uses a moral argument in defence of its position. It says it wants to save a threatened fish species, halibut, from extinction. It maintains that other fish species had become extinct because of over fishing. Spain on the other hand rests its case on international law that makes Canadian actions unjustified. Canada's position would have been stronger of course had it resorted in the first place to a diplomatic solution rather than arrest the Spanish trawler. Likewise Spain and the EU should have shown more sensitivity to Canadian concerns. Spain and the EU need to defer their legal position in favour of the endangered fish and the ecosystem. The international community should meanwhile move to address the existing loopholes in the law of the sea by legislating on how international waters can be sensibly used.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily on Friday addressed Jordanian-Egyptian relations and the Kingdom's endeavours to improve inter-Arab relations. It said in an editorial that the Jordanian-Egyptian economic and political relations are important not only because they give other Arab countries a good example to follow, but also because both countries are leading peace efforts in the region at a time when the Arab World is facing grave challenges. It said the leaderships of the two countries were, therefore, keen to preserve the pan-Arab identity within a framework of full partnership aiming to build a better future for the region. What should be emphasised here is that Jordan is seeking to activate bilateral agreements with Egypt and to propose new cooperation agreements out of the Kingdom's keenness to achieve Arab solidarity because the existing challenges threatening all parts of the Arab World require joint Arab action, the paper said. This is why His Majesty King Hussein voiced his support for the steadfast people of occupied South Lebanon (donating JD 50,000) and why Jordan supports in its stand on the need to rid the region of all mass destruction weapons, it said. This is also the case in Jordan's support for the Palestinians' quest to regain their full rights on their national soil, it added. The paper concluded by expressing hope that the Jordanian Egyptian relations would open new scopes for returning inter-Arab relations to normalcy and achieve Arab dreams of pan-Arab unity.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour daily on Friday called on the Arab countries to extend every possible support to the people of the Israeli-occupied South Lebanon. Mohammad Ka'wash said if Israel really wants peace, it must know that peace is indivisible. He said if Israel wants also peace based on justice, justice also is indivisible. If the Arab status quo led to the absence of Arab coordination at this stage and consequently led to the Arab states' inability to take a unified stand during the peace negotiations, then the rulers of Israel should know that there can be no stability nor security without having a comprehensive peace at all fronts, he said. Israel should be reminded of these facts as it continues its terrorist acts in South Lebanon and continues to attack Lebanese villages, cities and refugee camps, said the writer.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Peace must allow Palestinians total economic freedom

THE RECENT visit of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the Middle East was a watershed for most optimists in that it reinvigorated the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Palestinian tracks of peace negotiations and assured Jordan of continued American commitment to help the Kingdom meet its economic and military needs.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty that prevailed at the time of the Christopher visit over American debt write-off to Jordan, subsequent developments in the U.S. Congress indicate strongly that the Clinton administration is indeed living up to its pledge to the Kingdom. Beyond the expected debt relief to Jordan is, however, the question of the Kingdom's need for direct economic and military assistance from the United States. Hopefully this will be tackled during the late March visit to the U.S. by His Majesty King Hussein.

In the political context, one key message that Jordan gave to Mr. Christopher during his brief stopover in Amman in between Israel and Syria was that the Palestinian track should not be allowed to suffer and stagnate at any cost.

The key to the entire Middle East conflict is indeed a just and durable solution to the Palestinian conflict and unless it is reached then one can hardly say that peace has been restored to the region. There may be a million different interpretations to the moves undertaken by the different players in the Middle East peace process, but the importance of the Palestinian track is overriding everything else.

Hopefully, Mr. Christopher understood the vital importance of advancing the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and reaffirmed it to the Israeli leaders he met during the mission. We look forward to seeing translation of his message and Israeli realisation of the importance of the message into reality soon.

In this context, however, there are signs that Israel is still holding onto some of its demands in negotiations with the Palestinians. Indeed, the accord reached by Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, who heads the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in Gaza and Jericho, and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to set a July 1 deadline for reaching agreement on Israeli army deployment in the West Bank is very welcome. But reaching an agreement to reach an agreement is no answer to the continued suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation. The moves undertaken by Israel to

increase slightly the number of Palestinians allowed to enter the Jewish state are not simply enough. On the contrary, Israel should relax its iron grip on the economy of the Palestinians by allowing closer interaction between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on the one hand and Arab countries on the other.

The policy followed by Israel so far clearly indicates that the Jewish state does not entertain any plans to allow significant Palestinian-Arab interaction except of course for direct Arab economic contribution to the Palestinians.

That in itself is a non-starter. By binding the Palestinians through the Paris economic cooperation agreement signed in April, Israel is continuing to keep the Palestinian market closed to others. This naturally restrains the Palestinians' options of developing their own industry and doing what they could in terms of exports to Arab countries.

In this era of the so-called new world order, no Arab country is willing to shell out millions of dollars in aid to the Palestinians. At this transitional stage, however, there is a strong possibility that many of them would look favourably upon trade and economic ties with the Palestinians to make up for the lack of Arab aid for them. But the situation is very fluid and today's readiness to accept to deal with the Palestinians in business may not be very fresh tomorrow. And this does not bode well for the much-heralded Palestinian economic development.

There is little substance in Israel's argument that opening up the Palestinian market means seepage of non-Palestinian goods into the Israeli market. By definition, the policy of "separation" from the Palestinians that is under works in Israel means blocking Palestinians entering the Jewish state. But the same token, there is little to prevent Israel from controlling the entry of goods into its territory.

All said and done, there are many urgent measures that Israel should introduce to continue to keep the peace process alive and kicking and in the meantime also ensure that the process would lead to just peace that entails a better standard of living for the Palestinians. If that component is missing, especially as a result of Israel's self-oriented policies, then just and fair peace would not have any meaning.

We strongly hope that U.S. Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross, who is expected in the region soon, will not confine himself to the Syrian-Israeli track, but will also seek to advance the Palestinian-Israeli track against the realities of the requirements of a just peace.



Will Israel choose apartheid or peace?

The following article appeared as an editorial in the March 3 issue at Middle East International.

THE GOVERNMENT of the United States favours the practice of apartheid in Israel, true or false? An experienced observer, writing in the Christian Science Monitor, recently addressed this question.

Why is the Clinton administration giving generous support to a foreign government that is implementing, in its major city, the grossest forms of discrimination on the basis of religion and ethnicity?

Whatever the reason, the facts are there for all to see in the settlements which the Israeli government is hastily extending in East Jerusalem and which are designed to be exclusively occupied by Jews. And the writer remarked that Americans would be shocked to be told

that housing developments in any American city were "off limits" to Jews, in the way that these Israeli settlements are closed to the indigenous Muslim and Christian citizens of Jerusalem.

But these settlements are not merely off limits to the Palestinians; the express purpose behind their construction is to turn the Palestinians into a minority in their own city and, eventually, to pressure them into leaving it altogether. Israel's colonisation of the refugee camps all round Israel's borders. Its aim is the enforcement of Israeli control over the whole of Palestine, with no nonsense about equal rights for all its inhabitants. It is a policy which could not succeed against the tide of international opinion but for the lavish political and economic support provided by the government and people of the United States.

This policy, with its American backing, is not just a question of morality or human rights; it lies at the heart of the struggle over the future of Palestine, whose outcome will determine the fate of millions of Jews and Arabs for years to come.

And the outcome must be one of two alternatives. If Israel succeeds in swallowing all of Palestine and denying the Palestinians their independence, Israel's status as a society based on racial discrimination will be confirmed. The Palestinians will not submit voluntarily to being forcibly absorbed into an alien community whose very raison d'être is its insistence on being exclusive. The Israelis, unless they abandon Zionism, cannot do other than practice apartheid between the "chosen" and the rest; and so four or five million Israeli Jews will continue to impose their dominion on one or two

million Palestinian Arabs not to mention those other unhappy and resentful millions in the Palestinian diaspora.

And the second alternative? If Israel fails to secure the whole Palestine and gives up the ambition to dominate the Palestinians, it would still have difficulty in pacifying the enemies of peace, meaning Israel's own fanatics among the settlers and those Palestinians whom they have goaded into armed resistance. But there would be a common interest among all the rest on both sides to bury the hatchet, as whites and blacks have done in South Africa, and to taste the forgotten fruits of peace.

Can anyone persuade Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that the second pattern is worth trying for? It means, in moral terms, a change of heart, and that's not easy for a man of Mr. Rabin's stamp.

Why NATO should be expanded

The writer is U.S. assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs.

By Richard C. Holbrook

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton's four trips to Europe last year underline an inescapable fact: The United States has become a European power in a sense that goes beyond traditional assertions of America's "commitment" of Europe. In the 21st century, Europe will still need the active American involvement that has been a necessary component of the continental balance for half a century. Conversely, an unstable Europe would still threaten essential national security interests of the United States. This is as true after the cold war as it was during it.

I do not intend to suggest that nothing has changed. Local conflicts, internal political and economic instability, and the return of historical grievances have replaced Soviet expansionism as the greatest threat to peace in Europe. Western Europe and America must jointly ensure that tolerant democracies become rooted throughout Europe and that angry legacies of the past are contained and solved. The emotional but also practical lure of the West can be the strongest unifying force. Europe has seen in generations, if the opportunity is not squandered.

The tragedy of Bosnia does not diminish the responsibility to build a new security architecture. As the greatest collective security failure of the West since the 1930s, it only underscores the urgency of that task.

The central security pillar of the new architecture is NATO. Expansion of NATO is a logical and essential consequence of the disappearance of the Iron Curtain and the need to widen European unity based on shared democratic values. NATO has embarked on a two-phase programme for 1995. During the first part of this year, NATO is determining through an internal discussion the rationale and process for expanding the new, post-cold war NATO.

In the months prior to the December 1995 ministerial meeting, NATO's views will be presented individually to members of the Partnership for Peace — the first such detailed discussions on the subject to take place outside the alliance. In December, NATO ministers will review the results of these discussions before deciding how to proceed. Several key points should be stressed:

• NATO expansion must strengthen security in the entire region, including nations that are not members.

• The rationale and process for NATO's expansion will be transparent, not secret.

• There is no timetable or list of nations that will be invited to join NATO.

These will emerge as the process moves forward. • Each nation will be considered individually, not as part of some grouping.

• No outside nation will exercise a veto.

• As was the case in the original Washington treaty, new members must be democratic, have market economies, be committed to responsible security policies and be able to contribute to the alliance. As president Clinton has stated, "countries with repressive political systems, countries with designs on their neighbours, countries with militaries unchecked by civilian control or with closed economic systems need not apply."

Each new NATO member constitutes for the United States the most solemn of commitments: a bilateral defence treaty that extends the U.S. security umbrella to a new nation. This requires ratification by two-thirds of the U.S. Senate, a point that is often overlooked.

NATO expansion cannot occur in a vacuum. If it did, it would encourage the very instabilities it was seeking to avoid. In addition to NATO, the new architecture involves the European Union and other arrangements such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

If the West is to create an enduring and stable security framework for Europe, it must solve the most enduring strategic problem of Europe and integrate the nations of the former Soviet Union, especially Russia, into a stable European security system.

The U.S. goal remains a healthy and democratic Russia pursuing reform and respecting its citizens' rights. This is why the events in Chechnya are so disturbing.

As Russia undergoes a historic transformation, it would be a terrible mistake to react reflexively to each of the ups and downs it experiences. If the forces of reform are embattled, the United States must reinforce, not retreat from, its support for them.

Enhancement of stability in Central Europe is a mutual interest of Russia and the United States. NATO, which poses no threat to Russian security, seeks a direct, open relationship with Russia that both recognises Russia's special position and stature and reinforces the integrity of the other newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. Informal discussions on a possible new NATO-Russia relationship, highly preliminary, began in January when Secretary of State Warren Christopher met in Geneva with Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

This comment was adapted for the International Herald Tribune from the current issue of Foreign Affairs.

Writers association ignoring real issues, focusing on slogans

By Sa'eda Kilani

JORDANIAN COLUMNISTS focused this week on domestic issues, particularly elections in the various associations, unions, leagues and organisations in the Kingdom.

Many writers addressed the resignation of Mu'nis Razzaz as president of the Jordanian Writers Association (JWA). Columnists were concerned, not only with JWA's future and conflicts within the association, but also with what is known as the dispute over the "normalisation" of ties with Israel.

Some writers voiced their dismay at the successive events that led to Mr. Razzaz's resignation on March 9, saying these events are constant crises that hit the Jordanian society in all domains and in all unions. Mr. Razzaz's resignation, Al Ra'i cultural editor Bassem Rafai'eh said, can only be considered as a

strong reflection of the crisis, that all ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the association have failed to contain.

Any one who thinks that the solution to these crises lies in the resignation of administrative committees is mistaken, Mr. Rafai'eh said. There is a dire need to look into the roots of the problem instead of creating problems out of nothing, he said.

Fakhri Saleh, a columnist at Al Dustour, examined the problem from the cultural perspective and mainly focused on the association's lack of research and achievements. He said the association is delving into a futile debate over slogans while cultural issues have been neglected. The association, Mr. Saleh said, has not issued its magazine for a whole year nor has it organised any significant and specialised seminars since 1992. Columnists had a more

critical approach and showed mixed reactions to the elections of the Bar Association in light of decision taken by the justice minister, Hisham Al Tel, to ban West Bank lawyers from taking part in the elections.

The decision by Mr. Al Tel is perfectly correct, constitutionally, legally and

terms of context as much as in terms of timing. The Kingdom's decision to sever ties with the West Bank was taken in 1988 and several elections had been held since then without interference from the government.

Al Ra'i columnist Fahed Al Fanek dismissed all arguments for or against

registered in the association for financial reasons. They serve as reserved votes in the hands of certain groups which try to infiltrate the country.

Columnists also talked about a wide variety of subjects, among which were the International Women's Day, UNRWA's services in Jordan and Israeli tourism in the country.

Columnist Zuleikah Abu Rishah called on all "men and women" to look at the world from a woman's point of view. In her column at Al Ra'i, Ms. Abu Rishah said it's time that the world gave priority to women's way of thinking and way of perceiving things. It's not a call for equality, she said, it is a call for liberty, to liberate men and women alike.

Taher Adwan, a columnist in Al Dustour, heavily criticised and refuted Israeli claims that Petra is an archaeological

site that historically belongs to the Jews. Mr. Adwan said that Arabs found out, after a long history of conflict between Arabs and Israelis, that "there is a huge amount of facts that have been stamped to serve the conflict against the Arabs and the Palestinians."

Israelis should respect the Arab and Islamic culture, he said. They should respect our traditions and put aside all their illusions and fantasies they have of Arabs and the Arab World.

Mr. Yasser Za'atreh, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that all the rumours and talks about the reductions of UNRWA's services in Jordan are basically due to the organisation's lack of interest in the employee's concerns. What is needed, he said, is a more civilised treatment of employees. The government should try to push the organisation to better treat its employees since they are Jordan's citizens, first and foremost.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

politically, Abdullah Radwan from Al Ra'i newspaper said. How can the same person have the same political rights in two countries, and how can we demand the full independence of the Palestinian decision while rejecting all constitutional and legal decisions that allow this independence to prosper?

But Hussein Abu Ruman, also columnist at Al Ra'i, said the minister's decision was not right, not in

the decision as an infringement on Jordan's sovereignty as a disparagement to the notion of a Palestinian state. He said that all the points that columnists and writers have been debating since the minister's decision was issued are baseless. The most important element in the issue as a whole is, according to Dr. Fanek, that there are 236 graduates who have not practised their profession, but are

Kuwaiti deputies assail government over Al Anbaa

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — Kuwaiti lawmakers Friday accused the government of trying to muzzle the press after it suspended publication of the daily Al Anbaa.

"The government should have consulted parliament before taking such a decision, which risks poisoning relations between the executive and legislature," Islamist Deputy Ahmad Baqer told AFP.

The Kuwaiti government decided Wednesday to suspend until March 20 Al Anbaa's publication. The paper, essentially allied with the government, was accused of publishing articles "harmful to the country's interests or reputation."

Mr. Baqer said sanctions were necessary, but "only provided freedom of speech is unaffected and no new restrictions are imposed on the press."

Hamad Al Jawaan, a liberal deputy quoted by the daily Al Qabas, said the government had exploited attacks on Al Anbaa by certain deputies "to deliver a crushing blow to the press and freedom of speech."

Al Qabas and another daily, Al Watan, also condemned the government suspension of Al Anbaa.

In Washington, Human Rights Watch protested the decision Thursday, calling it a violation of the principle of freedom of speech, in an open letter to the Kuwaiti Crown Prince and prime minister.

The Rights group also expressed concern at Kuwait's threat to sanction other publications and journalists, saying the moves marked "serious violations of the principle of freedom of speech enshrined in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights."

Al Anbaa's suspension was the first such action by the Kuwaiti cabinet since the lifting of government press censorship in January 1992.

In Wednesday's edition, Al Anbaa printed an interview with the spokesman of the Muslim fundamentalist opposition group, the Islamic Constitutional Movement.

The spokesman, Issa Al Shahin, claimed the government had lost the trust of "many segments of Kuwaiti society" and said its cooperation with secularist lawmakers would bring it down.

He censured the government's backing of liberal Education Minister Ahmad Al Rubai in a no-confidence vote last month and insisted the cabinet should have a majority of elected ministers.



SPANISH WEDDING: Their Royal Highnesses Princesses Alia Bint Al Hussein, Zein Bint Al Hussein and Aishah Bint Al Hussein and (right) Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hassan, her husband Naser Judeh and their two children arrive in Seville, Spain, on Thursday to attend the marriage ceremony of Spanish Princess Infanta Elena, daughter of King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia, and Jaime de Marichalar. The marriage will take place on Saturday (AFP photo)



Jordan, Egypt pay tribute to their relations as model

(Continued from page 1)

into achievements and that our two peoples would feel their fruits and results," he said.

Sharif Zeid thanked the Egyptian officials for their hospitality and said he was looking forward to meeting Dr. Sedki and the Egyptian ministers in Amman for the committee's next meeting.

In his address to the final session, Dr. Sedki noted that the meetings dealt with everything that could bolster bilateral ties in political, economic, social, cultural, transport, communications and energy fields.

He said cooperation between Jordan and Egypt was proceeding well and would serve the aspirations of the two peoples. He stressed the importance of Arab cooperation and voiced hope that Jordanian-Egyptian cooperation would be an example to be followed by other countries.

At the conclusion of the committee's meetings, a press statement was issued outlining agreements reached between the two countries.

The communiqué said the two sides reviewed regional and international issues, issues of common interest and developments of concern to the Arab Nation.

The two sides agreed to unify their stands on these Arab, regional and international issues, and particularly to support to the peace process and push it forward, it said.

In this regard, Egypt welcomed the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty as an important step on the way to achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region, it said.

The statement said the two sides underlined the need to implement what was agreed upon between the Palestinians and Israelis in their track of negotiations and to encourage efforts to bring the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli negotiations to success so that comprehensive peace, security and stability could be achieved for all the people of the region.

The two sides stressed that they would continue efforts to support the Arab League and seek to achieve Arab reconciliation and affirmed the need to free the Middle East of all mass destruction weapons to guarantee achieving balanced security for all parties, including Israel.

It said that the two sides expressed the belief that important steps were taken by Iraq in the right direction towards implementing the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and underlined

their confidence that the completion of these steps would remove the remaining problems impeding confidence-building between the concerned parties and emphasised the need to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people and achieving stability in the region.

The two sides also stressed their determination to coordinate between their ministries of interior and to consult on political, economic and development issues so as to serve their common interests, the statement said.

The statement said the Jordanian-Egyptian Holding Company's general assembly was called for a meeting to evaluate the performance of the company and take the necessary measures that would help the company achieve its objectives.

The committee also called for holding contacts between officials in the two countries to prepare an agreement on promoting investments and expressed their desire to expand the scope of preferential treatment given to exchanged commodities.

The committee recommended convening a meeting of the joint trade committee before the end of the second quarter of 1995 to discuss means of achieving this goal and recommended the setting of the trade balance,

which is currently in favour of Egypt, by exporting Jordanian commodities before the end of next July.

It also called for facilitating the transit of trucks owned by the two countries' nationals regardless of the origin of the goods they carry and urged the signing of a deal to avoid double taxation.

It recommended holding a meeting of the joint planning committee in two months to prepare programmes needed to exchange experiences, studies, training and advisory services.

The committee voiced its satisfaction over the progress achieved in linking the national electricity grids of the two countries with three other Middle Eastern countries and called for completing the project before 1997.

It called for launching joint ventures to manufacture electric machines and spare parts for power-generating stations.

The two sides agreed to cooperate in the field of protecting the environment through exchanging expertise, information, environmental legislation and studies.

The committee called for cooperation between the two countries in seismology fields, agriculture, transport, communications, education, tourism, culture, informa-

tion, youth and sports.

It called for speeding up the process of signing the executive programme of 1995-97 to enhance cooperation in these fields.

It also urged expanding cooperation in security and the formation of a joint consular committee.

The committee also called for activating a judicial cooperation agreement signed between the two countries and another agreement on cooperation in labour-related fields, stressing the need to find a mechanism to organise the entry of labourers into the two countries.

It stressed the need to a suitable deadline for nationalisation of the two countries working without work permits to correct their situation in accordance with the labour market's needs in both countries.

The committee also recommended convening its next meeting in Amman in mid-September 1995.

Sharif Zeid, who arrived in Cairo Thursday on the head of a high-level ministerial team, was seen off at Cairo airport Friday by Dr. Sedki and members of the Egyptian side in the talks.

He was received at Queen Alia International Airport by Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh, Deputy

Prime Minister and Information Minister Khaled Al Karaki, Minister of State for the Prime Ministry Affairs Ibrahim Izzeddin and Minister of State for Parliamentary and Legal Affairs Abdul Majid Al Azzam.

The delegation accompanying Sharif Zeid to Egypt included Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti, Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb, Interior Minister Saleh Hamad, Minister of Transport Samir Kassar, Minister of Labour Nader Abul Shaar, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Samih Darwazah and Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Abdul Ilah Al Khatib.

The minutes of the committee's meeting were signed Friday afternoon in Cairo by Sharif Zeid and Dr. Sedki.

Travel eased

Interior Minister Saleh Hamad on Friday said his Egyptian counterpart has issued instructions to the concerned authorities to facilitate procedures facing Jordanian nationals visiting Egypt.

Mr. Hamad, who met with Egyptian Interior Minister Major-General Hassan Al Alfi, said Jordanian nationals visiting Egypt will soon start to feel the results of easy procedures at crossing points between the two countries.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hundreds of Israelis turned away

TEL AVIV (R) — Hundreds of Israeli tourists were turned away by overwhelmed Jordanian border authorities on Thursday during a Jewish holiday rush to cross into the Kingdom, an Israeli official said. More than 2,000 Israeli holidaymakers lined up at the recently opened bridge over the Jordan River hoping to spend a three-day Purim festival break in Jordan. Jordanian officials at the bridge, stretching the daily quota of 600 Israelis, allowed in an extra 200.

Iranian pirates seized up to 30 vessels

LONDON (AFP) — Iranian pirates have seized up to 30 merchant ships in the Gulf, releasing some of them only after the owners paid a ransom, Lloyd's List said Friday. The specialised British maritime daily quoted unidentified Gulf sources as saying that the piracy in one of the world's busiest waterways probably had been carried out by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The paper's sources said the Iranian army was not involved. The paper cited the example of the Dutch shipping company Wijnmuller, whose tug was returned to the company only after payment of a ransom. It was seized while towing a 12,000-tonne cargo ship, the Capriolo, out of the Shatt Al Arab waterway. The Dutch company declined to comment.

Troops shell Aden airport in protest

DUBAI (AFP) — The commander of a military camp in Aden ordered his troops to shell the southern city's airport in protest at his transfer to the Yemen capital Sanaa, the Arabic daily Al Hayat reported Friday. "Several shells landed near the airport runway" Wednesday, the paper said, quoting witnesses. The troops fired anti-aircraft guns and artillery. An officer at the camp told AFP the shelling was part of live-fire military exercises. Al Thawra, the mouthpiece of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), Friday reported shelling lasting several hours from the army camp, in Aden's Al Makasir district. Residents of Aden regularly hear firing from military camps in the city, formerly the stronghold of YSP Ali Salem Al Baid. President Ali Abdullah Saleh's forces ousted those of Mr. Baidh from the city in the May-July 1994 civil war.

Suspected art thieves appear in court

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A Frenchman and an Israeli art dealer appeared in court on Friday linked with the theft of 14 masterpieces in Paris last month. Marc Sibbon, 53, a tourist from France, was remanded in custody for 10 days while investigations continue. His suspected accomplice, Muriel Ben Harush, 48, of Tel Aviv, was put under house arrest for 15 days on bail of \$18,000. The court ordered her to surrender her passport and cut her telephone. The pair were arrested last Saturday following an anonymous tip-off. Police found paintings and drawings by Degas, Matisse, Modigliani, Picasso and Van Gogh in their car and a flat rented by Mr. Sibbon in Tel Aviv. "We have confirmation that eight of the paintings were stolen in an armed robbery at an art dealer's home in Paris on Feb. 21," police spokesman Eric Bar Chen told AFP.

Deported Bangladeshi stage protest

CHITTAGONG (AFP) — Nearly 2,000 Bangladeshi workers, deported by Saudi Arabia last month, arrived here Friday claiming they were poorly fed and given medical attention during an arduous 17-day sea voyage. The 1,988 deportees staged a noisy protest from the ship's deck, screaming anti-Saudi slogans and claiming one person died and some 200 fell ill during the trip which took far longer than necessary. They also demanded that the captain of the Panamanian registered Mecca-1 be punished for spending so long at sea and accused the crew of giving them poor food and denying them medical facilities. One of the returnees, 25-year-old Nur Mohammad, died on board the ship after allegedly being wounded while in Saudi police custody, returnees and port officials said. The ship left Saudi on Feb. 28 and was due to arrive in Chittagong on March 12, some of them said. Captain Amin Pakhi was unavailable for comment on the claims and an allegation Mohammad died because he had not received attention.

Herzog tells Israeli parliament to behave

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Former President Chaim Herzog told Israel's unruly parliament on Friday to learn some manners or stop inviting foreign leaders. "Standards in our parliament leave much to be desired," wrote Mr. Herzog in Friday's Jerusalem Post. "At times, the hospitality extended to distinguished visitors can be downright insulting," said Mr. Herzog, who grew up in Belfast and was a British army intelligence officer during World War II. "I well recall how hurt an Eastern European head of state was when he faced the Knesset with only a third of the members present and only five ministers out of 18. Add to that late arrivals during a visitor's speech, the passing of rates and whispered conversations and we have an atmosphere which is completely foreign to visitors, who certainly do not expect such behaviour." When earlier this month the Lithuanian president offered a moving apology to the Jewish people for the role of his countrymen in the Holocaust, the house was virtually empty.

Jordan needs 'new ideas' on debts

(Continued from page 12)

further debt write-offs, then international investors "might think there is something wrong" with the Jordanian economy and this might dissuade them from coming in with capital.

According to figures released by the Ministry of Finance, Jordan's foreign debts were spread as under at the end of 1994:

1. Long-term loans: JD 4,365.8 million.
These included:
— JD 355.8 million owed to Arab governments and funds.

JD 2,776.9 million to industrialised countries (including Germany 329.3 million; France JD 492.3 million; Japan 1,253.4 million; the United Kingdom JD 369 million and the United States JD 99.2 million).

— Foreign banks JD 132.8 million;
— Foreign companies JD 24.3 million;

— Multilateral institutions JD 1,065.8 million (including loans from the International Monetary Fund (JD 78.4 million), the International Bank for Reconstruction and development and the International Development Agency (JD 538.3 million), the Islamic Development Bank (JD 89.8 million), the Arab Monetary Fund (JD 24.5 million), and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (JD 193.3 million).

2. Bonds JD 40.2 million.
3. Leasing contracts (of Royal Jordanian aircraft from a French consortium) JD 206.7 million.

According to the Ministry of Finance figures, the total debt stood at JD 4,612.7 million.

Of these JD 712.6 million in principal and JD 248.3 million in interest have been rescheduled. A few rescheduling agreements with individual governments remain to be tied up.

Dean of journalists passes away

(Continued from page 1)

directors of the Jordan Press Foundation.

The greatest loss was that of the Jordan Press Foundation itself.

"He was a brother, a friend and a colleague," said Mr. Kayed, chairman of the board of directors of the foundation and former chief editor of Al Ra'i. "He has always called for freedom of the press."

The prime minister, Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, also mourned Mr. Hammad in a statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Jum'a Hammad was born near Beersabee, Palestine, in 1923. He completed his secondary education in Gaza in 1943. He became a businessman, and served as

director of the Bureau for the Islamic Congress for Jerusalem in 1954. He established Al Manar newspaper in Jerusalem in 1961 and became its chief editor. Afterwards he moved to Amman to join Al Akhbar newspaper and became its chief editor in 1967.

He became secretary general of the Arab National Union in 1973 and a member of the National Consultative Council in 1978. He was a member of the Senate for two consecutive terms until 1993. In 1994, he became minister of culture.

Mr. Hammad received various awards and is the author of several books. He was also a member in the Royal Commission that drew the National Charter.

Mr. Hammad is survived by his wife, five daughters and four sons.

EU to finance water studies

(Continued from page 1)

discuss how to realise the projects after the studies had been completed, possibly in June, and that Chancellor Kohl had promised to work to get support from other EU countries.

The Crown Prince's meetings in Bonn also dealt with issues related to the Amman economic summit to be held in October.

Omayya Touqan, director-general of the Amman Financial Market (AFM), told Jordan Television that the summit had both regional and international dimensions and that such conferences were necessary to attract international support and capital to the Kingdom.

Dr. Touqan said the German side to the meetings in Bonn showed support for the summit.

"The summit is an important event for Jordan on the local level," said Dr. Touqan. "It is the beginning of a new era of restructuring, and our economic performance should be distinguished."

gun moving Palestinian prisoners out of the prison at Jenin to prepare for autonomy in the West Bank town, relatives of the detainees said.

About 90 of the 400 men in the jail have recently been shifted to other detention centres.

But a spokesman for the Israeli prison service said that the inmates had been transferred to other prisons simply to be nearer their families.

Mr. Rabin has proposed extending limited self-rule in Jenin, where several hundred Palestinian policemen have already been deployed in civilian clothes (see page 2).

But PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has demanded that any such move be part of an accord covering all the West Bank in line with the 1993 declaration of principles for autonomy.

According to an official close to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Mr. Arafat will visit Jenin for the first time at the end of the month.

Palestinian Sports Minister Azmi Al Shweibi visited Jenin on Wednesday and told people "to rejoice, because the Israelis are ready to leave the town and hand over to the self-rule authority next month or the month after."

Meanwhile Israel has been

Senate approves debt write-off

(Continued from page 1)

Christopher that "supporting debt forgiveness for Jordan... serves (the) specific national security interest" of promoting Arab-Israeli peace.

Under the formula adopted by the Senate on Thursday, the expenditure of the whole amount is approved, but the actual appropriation would come in two tranches.

"Jordan would have liked to see the whole move in one tranche," said the senior official. Although the write-off appeared to be certain, "you are not very comfortable until the actual move is formalised."

Reuter reported that \$50 million expenditure approved by the House of Representatives was part of a bill adopted by the House with a 227-200 vote on a \$17.2 billion spending cut.

The House of Representatives said the slashing of the requested \$275 million to \$50 million was prompted by budget constraints.

The amount approved by the House includes \$18.5 million expenditure to write off

\$56.4 million remaining debt to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), \$24 million to cancel \$46.7 million in dues to the U.S. Exim Bank, and \$7.5 million in security loans.

In contrast, the Senate approved the administration's request for the USAID and Exim Bank loans plus \$198.6 million to write off \$296.3 million in security loans, \$17.7 million for \$63.6 million in food loans and \$9.9 million for \$17.5 million loans in Commodity Credit Corporation Loans, Reuters reported.

The Senate proposal was introduced by Chairman of the Appropriations Committee Mitchell McConnell (Republican, Kentucky) and minority Democrat leader Patrick Leahy (Vermont).

The Senate-House of Representatives conference could be expected as early as next week since the entire defence spending bill — which incorporates the expenditure for Jordan debt relief — needs to be formally enacted before March 31 so that definite allocations could be made with effect from April 1.

Fateh decides to continue talks

(Continued from page 1)

cial told AFP, asking not to be named.

"The millions of Palestinians living abroad do not feel the impact of self-rule. Arafat has to decide — either he restricts himself to Gaza or he keeps the role of leader, and in that case the PLO must be the reference."

Several members of the PLO Executive Committee including senior PLO official Farouk Kaddoumi and Mahmoud Abbas, architect of the 1993 self-rule deal, are to argue for a suspension of autonomy negotiations as a warning to Israel.

However, Mr. Arafat was expected to face no difficulty

in pushing the Fateh decision to continue peace talks through the two-day PLO meeting.

"We can't stop without any alternative otherwise we will be stuck in the Gaza Strip and Jericho," where the first stage of self-rule was launched last May, said committee member Yasser Amer.

The Executive Committee is also to ratify a Fateh decision to keep the PLO's official headquarters in Tunis.

The Fateh meeting "reached an accord between those (Palestinians) who stayed abroad and those inside" the Palestinian territories," Dr. Shaath said.

Saudi Arabia issues bonds against debts to contractors

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia has issued special bonds to local and foreign contractors and suppliers to clear part of the billions of dollars in arrears, bankers have said.

The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA), the kingdom's central bank, is issuing bonds through the banks to a total of 120 contractors.

"We received on Tuesday a notification of some bonds issued to us on behalf of contractors," one bank manager said.

The bankers said the total value of the issued bonds was around five billion Saudi riyals (\$1.3 billion), which is 26 per cent of the estimated \$5 billion total debt to contractors.

Bankers and diplomats said the government had already made some payments in cash to some contractors this year, but it was not clear how much.

They said the bonds, with an issue date of March 15,

would have varying maturities, with redemption on March 31, 1996, September 30, 1996, March 31, 1997 or September 30, 1997.

The nominal value of the bonds was not clear, they said.

"The bonds will be for individual amounts," one banker said.

"There is no papers. They are being issued in the same format that they issue Saudi government development bonds which is an electronic bookkeeping entry," he said.

"The bonds carry a fixed coupon payable by the Saudi government semi-annually at either 6 1/2 per cent or 7 1/4 per cent."

The bankers said foreign contractors would also receive the bonds, a significant step in the kingdom where foreigners are excluded from buying government bonds.

"Foreign contractors are included. There have been limited cases where non-Saudis have had bonds be-

fore, but that was very very limited," one said.

The bankers said the Saudi government would not have been able to come up with the cash easily while it is trying to balance its budget and avoid falling further behind.

Saudi Arabia is many months behind in payments to some contractors, causing painful cash crunches and worries for some foreign workers, including doctors and nurses.

To some companies the government was only up to date until mid-1993 and to others possibly not even that recently, the bankers said.

Saudi Arabia had a fledgling capital market in which little trade takes place in development bonds. Banks tend to hold them until their two-to-five year maturities.

The bankers said contractors can either hold on to the bonds until they mature or negotiate to sell them to the banks if they need cash immediately.

They said that although the issued bonds would not cover the total government debt to contractors, it was still a clear message by the government that it will stand by its promises.

The government had said in January when it issued its 1995 budget that it planned to start paying back its debt to contractors and King Fahd had issued directions for implementing that.

"The government is saying we are sticking by our word and paying back," one banker said. "This will generate more confidence in the Saudi economy and fiscal policies."

"They (contractors) may not be happy in terms of not getting cash now. The sort of companies that might find it difficult are sub-contractors and suppliers who don't have direct contracts with the government and companies involved in services and maintenance," one banker said.

Iran steps up subsidies in '95-'96 budget

TEHRAN (AFP) — The Iranian parliament has adopted a budget for the next financial year marked by a large increase in subsidies for basic foods as the country battles an economic and social crisis.

The balanced budget of 96,100 billion riyals is 50 per cent larger than the 1994-95 budget, reflecting the plunge in value of the national currency over the last year.

At official exchange rates the country's general budget is \$55 billion and the state budget is \$26.5 billion.

Unlike previous years members of parliament made only minor adjustments to the government's spending plans which were considered realistic.

The March 1995-1996 budget sets out a 50 per cent rise in government subsidies for basic foods from \$850 million to \$1.25 billion.

Another \$420 million were earmarked for the import of subsidised pharmaceutical products.

The rial's collapse has triggered sharp inflation on most consumer products, prompting popular discontent. The central bank has put the inflation figure for last year at 50 per cent, but it is higher according to independent estimates.

The steep rise in subsidies will be partially offset by the doubling of Iranian oil products, which are among the cheapest in the world, and a large increase in services.

The government also forecasts a \$1 billion increase in its oil revenue to \$13.65 billion. Its figures are based on exports of 2.49 million barrels of oil a day at \$15 a barrel.

The oil ministry won parliament's go-ahead to raise directly \$1.2 billion in duties to finance oil, gas and petrochemical development projects, against the advice of the government which wanted to centralise taxation.

The budget sets aside \$1.6 billion to reduce Iran's external debts of \$36 billion which are at the root of the country's two-year financial crisis.

The central bank has been a ble to reschedule around \$1.5 billion in arrears, but the country has to pay creditors between \$6 to \$8 billion a year over the next five years.

The government also announced plans to cut the number of state and public officials.

Parliament tightened its control of all foreign currency expenditure by ministries, state companies and semi-official organisations benefiting from the official exchange rate which is 60 per cent lower than rates on the open market.

Members of parliament discussed the country's defence budget in a closed-door session and no figures were published.

Meanwhile most investment was devoted to oil, gas and petrochemical projects as well as transport and electricity.

South African budget shifts spending towards blacks

CAPE TOWN (R) — President Nelson Mandela's government has presented its budget to parliament pursuing South Africa's post-apartheid spending shift towards poor blacks and trying to attract investors.

"We've tried to create a budget that is economically sound and politically responsible," Finance Minister Chris Liebenberg told reporters before he presented the country's first budget crafted fully by a democratic government.

"This country's copybook political transformation must be matched by an equally impressive economic restructuring. The challenge the government faces is to manage its budget in a way that promotes real economic growth. This will increase the resources available to attain the objectives of the reconstruction and development programme," he said.

Mr. Liebenberg, who took over from former mining magnate Derek Keys last September, increased spending for the fiscal year beginning on April 1 by an inflation-matching 9.5 per cent to 153.3 billion rand (\$42.9 billion).

"In view of our commitment to reducing the budget deficit and in the context of the economic recovery in progress, the government has decided to budget for a deficit of about 29.1 billion rand (\$8.2 billion), or 5.8 per cent of the estimated GDP," he told parliament.

This compares with a deficit that equalled 6.4 per cent of 1994/95 gross domestic product on a comparable basis.

In line with Mr. Mandela's promise to address apartheid backlogs in housing, health care, education and employment, he allocated five billion rand (\$1.4 billion) to the second year of the government's flagship reconstruction and development programme (RDP).

Apart from the RDP allocation, he increased the share of state expenditure allocated directly to police, housing, education, health and social welfare and set aside 2.5 billion rand (\$695 million) to narrow the wage gap between black and white civil servants.

Defence spending was slashed by about 15 per cent in real terms to 10.5 billion rand (\$2.9 billion) despite a last-minute cabinet decision to reinstate 700 million (\$195 million) of the amount originally cut.

Banking largely on economic growth of at least 2.75 per cent in fiscal 1995/96 to drive up revenue, Mr. Liebenberg abolished punitive separate tax rates for single people and married women and introduced a unitary rate for all earners.

The two billion rand (\$555 million) cost of the parity measure imposed under an equality clause in South Africa's post-apartheid bill of rights was balanced by a two percentage point increase in the maximum marginal tax rate to 45 per cent for people earning over 80,000 rand (\$22,000) a year.

Mr. Liebenberg also hiked the state levy on petrol sales by two cents to 62.9 cents a litre and the "sin tax" on alcohol and tobacco products by 410 million rand (\$114 million) a year.

In key concessions to local and foreign investors, Mr. Liebenberg left corporate taxes unchanged and announced the abolition of a combined cost of 690 million rand (\$192 million) of import surcharges on luxury goods and appliances and of a non-resident shareholders' tax.

Deputy Finance Minister Alec Erwin told Reuters the cautious shift of resources towards blacks disadvantaged under three centuries of white rule was as much as Mr. Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) could have hoped for.

The ANC, runaway winners of the first all-race elec-

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Arab Gulf states slash spending by over 40 per cent since Kuwait war

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states have slashed spending by more than 40 per cent since the 1991 Gulf war as they continued to feel the pinch of low oil prices and their eroding overseas investment. A Gulf bank manager said.

Most of the spending cuts were in Saudi Arabia, which no longer can meet growing defence and development needs due to the weak crude prices, its commitment to creditors and a sharp decline in its reserves abroad.

Figures compiled from the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund and central banks in the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states showed they spend more than \$124 billion in 1991, the highest level in nearly 10 years.

Bankers said the high expenditure was due to cash contributions of nearly \$65 billion to finance a U.S.-led international coalition that ejected Iraqi forces from neighbouring Kuwait in February 1991.

Actual spending was gradually cut in the following years to reach around \$99 billion in 1992 and \$82 billion in 1993.

Expenditure was projected at around \$72 billion while it is expected to go below \$70 billion in 1995. This is because Saudi Arabia again trimmed spending and Kuwait is planning a tight budget to reduce the deficit.

"GCC expenditure is projected to be between \$65 billion and \$70 billion in 1995. This means that the combined expenditure has been slashed by nearly 43 per cent since 1991," a Gulf bank manager told AFP.

The largest spending cut was made by Saudi Arabia in 1994, when it unveiled a \$42 billion budget lower by 20 than the 1993 spending of \$52.5 billion. In 1995, it again cut spending by around six per cent to \$40 billion to slash the deficit to \$4 billion from \$10 billion.

Saudi Arabia's spending reached one of its highest levels in 1991, when it stood at \$73.3 billion while Kuwait spent a record \$26.3 billion. Bahrain, Oman and Qatar also spent more in 1991 but cut expenditure later.

The other GCC member, the United Arab Emirates

Peseta's drop puts new pressure on EMS

LONDON (AFP) — The mark surged to new record highs on Friday on the London foreign exchange market, putting pressure on the lira and sterling and especially on the peseta, which fell victim to rumours that it would be forced out of the European Monetary System (EMS) over the weekend.

The mark's new display of muscles forced the Bank of Spain and the Bank of Italy to intervene to defend the peseta and the lira, which fell to record lows during the session of 93.30 pesetas to the mark and 1,275.5 lire to the mark.

The two currencies stood in late afternoon at 92.82 pesetas to the mark and 1,255 lire, compared with 92.40 and 1,214.3 Thursday evening in London.

Sterling joined in the downturn, plummeting to an all-time low of 2.1870 marks, while the French franc was off to 3.58 francs to the mark, close to its record low of 3.59 reached last week.

Traders said the mark's new uptick got under way in the morning against the lira on rumours — later denied — that the Bank of Italy was getting ready to raise interest rates to defend its currency.

Operators commented that the Italian economy is not in a position to stand an additional rate rise, which would make debt service more burdensome.

On Thursday, the lira had remained very weak despite the government's parliamentary victory on the supplementary budget, and that fact led operators to intensify their offensive against the lira.

The peseta also slipped to a record low on rumours that the currency would exit the EMS over the weekend. Bank of America analyst Robert Hayward said such a development seemed quite possible, as the Bank of Spain does not have much left in its reserves for defending the peseta alone, and there can be no question of lifting Spanish interest rates.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY MARCH 18, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Lighter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Try to please your friends today instead of talking about personal worries. Show more consideration for the loved one in your life.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't irritate a higher up or you could have more trouble than you can handle. Show increased devotion to family members who are around you at the present time.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be alert to opportunities, but don't jump into anything too hastily. Studying old situations that need clarification bring right answers.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Use care and tact in attending to promises and gain the respect of others today. A new outlet can be profitable to you at this time if you manage it properly.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have to be tactful with an associate to prevent some action that could be detrimental to you both. Today, think constructively about going on with a project.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Quietly straighten out any errors at work and avoid getting panicky today. A fellow associate could be distraught so give words of encouragement.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You have to be more sensible where more practical matters are concerned to gain your aims today. Be poised for any situation that could come up.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Situations that arise today should be considered from the standpoint of how they will affect you and family matters which are around you in the future.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Attend to duties that must be done early in the day so that you will have time for social activities. Be cheerful to those around you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You need to apply yourself more now to gain your cherished wishes. Sidestep one who likes to impose on you or someone will get hurt.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Use good common sense today especially in the face of a possible emergency. Be sure to show thoughtfulness for others as well.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Carry through with original plans, even though you may be limited in some way. Use diplomacy in your business dealings so that things come your way faster.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

It's spring! Let's dance to the music that's playing in our hearts!

Sorry... my heart is tuned to an all-talk station right now.

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By Henri Arnold and Mike Argison

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RELEC

KNALB

HERTHS

CORNBO

But, dear this is the last one. You can say that again!

WHERE "ONE TOO MANY" CAN PUT A MARRIAGE.

Now arrange the jumbled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: THE

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: AGLOW FRUIT BYGONE SCRIBE

Answer: What he did when she forgot the sun block lotion — A SLOW BURN

THE Daily Crossword

by Don Johnson

ACROSS

- 1 Gutter sound
- 2 Knocks
- 3 Bandy words
- 4 about an argument
- 5 Slip
- 6 Throw off
- 7 Johnny-cake kin
- 8 Advancing copied principles
- 9 Flirtatious pet
- 10 Tiny bit
- 11 Celebrate
- 12 Suppliment with great effort
- 13 Le Duc — of Vietnam
- 14 Grecoan theatres
- 15 Portals
- 16 Cash measure of a kind
- 17 Singer McEntire
- 18 Seize
- 19 Guessed
- 20 Flavor
- 21 Native of suff.
- 22 Camiere
- 23 Nonsense
- 24 Nest to
- 25 Test
- 26 Religious retreat
- 27 — Penn. Co.
- 28 Vipers
- 29 Heavy weight
- 30 Branch
- 31 Flag colors
- 32 Desert dweller
- 33 Bring up
- 34 Probs
- 35 Mineral salsate
- 36 Orient
- 37 English queens
- 38 Egg
- 39 The — the limit
- 40 Poor

DOWN

- 1 Arizona town
- 2 Infat, as
- 3 Musical Shaw
- 4 Lunchtime
- 5 Cave
- 6 Certain fish
- 7 French friend
- 8 Dean
- 9 Arose
- 10 Column or cord
- 11 Inferior
- 12 Part of A.M.
- 13 Study
- 14 Commandment word
- 15 United Kingdom
- 16 Infantile
- 17 Barker
- 18 "If You Know" (old song)
- 19 Author Haley
- 20 Actress
- 21 Rebounds
- 22 Yellow cheese
- 23 — Aves
- 24 Cupid
- 25 The two
- 26 Songbirds
- 27 Disorient
- 28 — man
- 29 (sophomr)
- 30 Reains
- 31 46 007's school
- 32 49 Restaurant
- 33 47 Unity
- 34 51 Musical show
- 35 60 Newswr
- 36 53 T-bone
- 37 55 Skirt style
- 38 56 Governed
- 39 58 Incine
- 40 59 Ashtray's late
- 41 61 Free from worry
- 42 62 Poison

business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Investment Law benefits 123 projects

★ A TOTAL of 123 projects benefited from the Investment Encouragement Law last year compared to only 78 projects in 1993. Capital invested in 1994 amounted to JD 257.4 million whereas the invested capital was JD 168.9 in 1993. The projects obtained JD 101.7 million of credits last year.

According to statistics from the Investment Encouragement Department, the total value of the fixed assets for the projects which benefited from the law was JD 153 million. The projects, which provided 9,264 job opportunities (5,612 in 1993), had a total production value of JD 322.8 million (AI Ra'i).

★ THE GENERAL assembly of the Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural (ICA) Company has approved raising the capital of the firm from JD 5 million to JD 7.5 million. ICA Board Chairman Mohammad Abu Hassan said increasing the capital to finance new investments was better than borrowing from banks due to high banking costs that will burden the company. He added that the ICA management prefers raising the capital through floating shares for subscription.

Mr. Abu Hassan stressed that ICA, better known as Al Intaj, was recording higher productivity and sales noting that the sales between 1990 to 1994 equalled the sales of the previous 30 years. Al Intaj distributed 15 per cent dividend in 1993. General Manager Yahya Al Alami said the company has JD 25 million of reserves and retained earnings and that total investments during the past five years amounted to JD 10 million, mainly in two industrial companies set up in Mafraq. The companies are: The Consolidated Detergent Industries and the Consolidated Sulpho Chemical Industries (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaj).

★ A TRIPARTITE committee from the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Jordan and the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) has been formed to assess the agricultural loans at the Jordan Cooperative Organisation (JCO) and the Cooperative Bank. The committee is expected to present a comprehensive report next month to be a basis for drawing up a collection programme that would take into consideration the situation of the farmer on the one hand and the financial rights of the state on the other hand. ACC General Manager Abdul Latif Arabiyat estimated the volume of loans at JD 14 million. The amounts to be collected from these loans will be put in a special account at the Ministry of Finance to repay part of JD 26 million of overdue external credits owed by the JCO since 1988. The JCO is also indebted by about JD 20 million to foreign creditors and by JD 6 million in local loans.

As for non-agricultural loans, it has been learnt that the government intends to form a committee to work out solutions to these loans and other insured credits. Upon liquidating JCO, staff will either be retired, compensated or transferred to other government institutions.

★ THE 1994 annual report of the Arabian Sea Insurance Company (ASIC) shows that the firm earned JD2.7 million in premiums in 1994, about 25 per cent more than in 1993. The marine department recorded JD0.5 million in premiums while the fire department posted JD0.6 million. Vehicle insurance, at JD1.4 million, accounted for 49.66 per cent of the premiums earned, with the general accidents department adding JD0.3 million. ASIC boasted that none of its departments registered a loss. The board of directors is recommending to the general assembly the distribution of dividends at 12 per cent (Al Aswaj).

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Share prices took a plunge at the Amman stock market this week as speculators sought to shift capital to lucrative bank deposits, leading to a crunch in liquidity in the bourse, market dealers said.

They said many investors were liquidating their holdings in the Amman Financial Market (AFM) and turning to three-month and six-month certificates of deposits (CDs) offered by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) with an average yield of 8.5 per cent.

Jordan to tap Eurobond market soon

(Continued from page 12)

Projects drawn up by the TOC cover Jordan's telecommunication needs until the year 2007 and are estimated to cost \$1.2 billion, and the Eurobonds market is seen as one of the potential sources that the Kingdom would tap for its needs.

"This is the first time Jordan is going to the Eurobonds market since 1988," when the Kingdom raised about \$60 million, noted one source.

"Although eight per cent is the interest rate being discussed, Jordan believes that it should be slightly less, given that the World Bank is guaranteeing the bonds," added the source.

But, economic experts say, the rate was likely to be higher when the issue is finalised, given that the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) is offering nine to 9.5 per cent on short-term certificates of deposits of dinars in a bid to keep the currency's edge over the American dollar and check any massive conversion from dinars to the greenback.

The \$50 million issue is also seen as a key test for European and international inclination to invest in Jordan, which is hoping to attract foreign capital in local investments after signing a peace treaty with Israel in October.

Investors flee AFM to bank deposits

The official AMF index based on 60 of the nearly 120 companies listed in the market closed at 140.37 points, posting a drop of 2.2 points or 1.65 per cent during the week.

Industrialists lost 2.5 per cent, service sector stock declined by 1.5 per cent, commercial banks and financial institutions by 1.1 per cent and insurance shares by 0.3 per cent during the week.

Volume for the week ending Thursday was 4.9 million dinars, up 75 per cent from the previous week's JD 2.8 million dinars.

The weekly report of the market said 2.2 million shares

changed hands during the week.

Stocks of 77 companies were covered in the week's trading. As business closed for the week on Wednesday (Thursday is set aside for accounting), only four of them showed gains; 67 closed with losses and six remained unchanged.

Industrial stock led trading, accounting for JD 2.34 million, or 48.1 per cent. Second came commercial banks and financial institutions with JD 1.41 million or 29 per cent, followed by the services sector with 970,000 dinars or 20 per cent and insurance shares with 140,000

dinars or 2.9 per cent.

AFM dealers said the sharp decline in prices, which followed a lethargic week after a long Muslim holiday, was a direct result of a tight monetary policy adopted by the Central Bank.

They said the issuance of CDs by the Central Bank was drawing capital away from the market, which is already beset with a liquidity problem as dozens of companies are coming out with fresh issues to increase their capital.

The Central Bank has opted to issue CDs with a view to maintaining the edge of the dinar against the dollar in terms of interest terms for

deposits.

"Commercial banks have to keep up with the high yield on the CDs, and, as such, they are also offering higher returns on short-term deposits," said an AFM dealer. "This has led many investors to turn their capital away from the uncertainties of the stock market."

The dealer, who cannot be identified by name under standing AFM guidelines, said it was difficult to estimate the amount of capital that has fled the market floor, particularly that some of it might also have been channelled to primary issues. All commercial banks here

are under instructions from the Central Bank to raise their capital to 20 million dinars (\$29 million) before the end of 1996. Some of them have already initiated moves to meet the demand through issuing fresh stock.

"Demand for more than JD 700 million in fresh capital is expected to come up in the next two years as the banks as well as other companies move to raise their capital," said a broker. "This will have a major impact on the market."

"Money has to be injected into the market," said the broker. "It could be local, it could be foreign, but the

injection has to be there. Otherwise the stock market will suffer."

Another reason for the decline in the AFM cited by brokers was a general disappointment that a U.S. congressional panel slashed to \$50 million a Clinton administration request for \$275 million in outlays to write off Jordan's \$488 million official debts to the U.S.

While the administration is seeking a compromise formula to ensure the full allocation, the slashing was taken as a sign that Jordan was not in line for any massive infusion of American aid, the brokers noted.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET ORGANISED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (11/03/1995 - 15/03/1995) WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PJO	233,590	188.500	188.500	188.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	179,203	4.420	4.420	4.420
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	229,826	4.230	4.230	4.250
BANK OF JORDAN	1,213	3.500	3.500	3.450
RIDLOE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	70,905	1.490	1.490	1.400
THE HOUSING BANK	86,900	6.090	6.090	6.020
JORDAN ROKWAT BANK	90,235	3.000	3.000	2.920
JORDAN OULF BANK	18,083	1.320	1.320	1.220
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	880	3.700	3.700	3.520
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	166,905	3.830	3.830	3.760
BUSINESS BANK	30,016	3.500	3.500	3.220
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	5,895	4.050	4.050	3.780
BEIT KHALIL SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	15,428	3.120	3.120	3.050
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	229,951	1.200	1.200	1.080
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	817	4.070	4.070	4.000
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	52,248	1.430	1.430	1.250
BANKS SECTOR	1412893	INDEX NUMBER: 156.59		
		CHANGE: -1.081		
JORDAN INSURANCE	1,700	3.400	3.400	3.400
ARABIAN SEAS INSURANCE	2,243	2.000	2.000	1.950
JORDAN FRANCH INSURANCE	126,770	2.500	2.500	2.450
YAMOUK INSURANCE & REINSURANCE	1,550	3.100	3.100	3.100
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	1,594	2.550	2.550	2.550
DELTA INSURANCE	5,200	2.600	2.600	2.600
	975	1.810	1.810	2.000
INSURANCE SECTOR	140031	INDEX NUMBER: 136.43		
		CHANGE: -0.347		
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	33,193	1.570	1.570	1.530
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	65,816	1.510	1.510	1.480
VEHICLES OWNERS FEDERATION	4,025	6.750	6.750	6.650
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	416,458	4.850	4.850	5.000
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS / NEW	15,276	4.600	4.600	4.700
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	134,169	3.360	3.360	3.130
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	5,962	2.190	2.190	2.050
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	6,705	0.970	0.970	0.880
MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	990	0.690	0.690	0.660
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	44,657	2.350	2.350	2.320
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	24,118	3.540	3.540	3.480
SERVICES SECTOR	753048	INDEX NUMBER: 130.66		
		CHANGE: -1.492		
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	23,716	33.500	33.500	28.000
ATZANQHEH COINT. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	2,848	1.200	1.200	1.100
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	260,407	2.990	2.990	2.960
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	2,200	5.020	5.020	4.900
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	13,009	9.440	9.440	9.350
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	12,516	3.800	3.800	3.580
THE JORDAN WOODEN MILLS	113,448	7.590	7.590	7.420
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	456,001	4.380	4.380	4.110
JORDAN DAIRY	1,235	2.050	2.050	2.100
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	36,832	2.700	2.700	2.700
JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	11,096	4.000	4.000	4.000
BAFIA INDUSTRIES	113,178	2.850	2.850	2.750
DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	129,580	7.970	7.970	7.800
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	52,880	0.940	0.940	0.870
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	52,859	6.750	6.750	6.400
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	225,398	0.730	0.730	0.660
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	29,468	1.420	1.420	1.380
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	21,331	3.830	3.830	3.450
INTERMEDIATE PESTO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	9,537	2.300	2.300	2.040
JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES	11,771	1.160	1.160	1.060
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1,415	4.100	4.100	4.000
ALABOL INDUSTRIES	5,820	4.200	4.200	4.150
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JINCO	18,481	0.740	0.740	0.670
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	2,263	4.740	4.740	4.550
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	9,311	1.630	1.630	1.500
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	20,746	2.570	2.570	2.340
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	148,516	4.140	4.140	4.040
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	31,843	2.060	2.060	1.950
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	1816956	INDEX NUMBER: 119.79		
		CHANGE: -1.477		
GRAND TOTAL	4122928	INDEX NUMBER: 140.38		
PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (11/03/1995 - 15/03/1995) WEEKLY REPORT				
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	30,247	0.900	0.900	0.890
JORDAN TRADE FACILITIES	39,446	0.780	0.780	0.750
KANSA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	12,576	1.420	1.420	1.390
UNIFIED CO. FOR ORGANISING LAND TRANS.	62,848	2.190	2.190	2.010
ARAB FIB INV.CO.	76,434	0.970	0.970	0.910
ARAB FOOD & MEDICAL APPLIANCES	1,547	1.050	1.050	1.030
NATIONAL CHLORINE INDUSTRIES CO.LTD	14,553	1.660	1.660	1.500
NATIONAL TEXTILE & PLASTICS IND. CO.	5,150	1.100	1.100	1.070
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	50,389	1.630	1.630	1.580
NATIONAL MULTIPLE INDUSTRIES	89,584	1.220	1.220	1.120
EL-SAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	51,801	2.300	2.300	2.250
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	107,461	1.550	1.550	1.520
UNIVERSAL NEEDLES	2,161	1.750	1.750	1.670
NATIONAL ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES	154,686	1.210	1.210	1.120
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY	2,106	2.580	2.580	2.520
JORDAN STEEL	24,702	0.980	0.980	0.960
ARAB ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES	21,766	0.880	0.880	0.840
GRAND TOTAL	741745			

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Previous Metals Date: 16/3/1995

Metal USD/Oz JD/Gm Metal USD/Oz JD/Gm

Gold 315.15 7.70 Silver 4.72 0.170

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 16/3/1995

Currency Bid Offer

U.S. Dollar 0.6860 0.6880

Sterling Pound 1.0929 1.0984

Deutsche Mark 0.4910 0.4935

Swiss Franc 0.5928 0.5958

French Franc 0.1383 0.1399

Japanese Yen 0.7617 0.7655

Dutch Guilder 0.4377 0.4399

Swedish Krona 0.0000 0.0000

Italian Lira 0.0405 0.0407

Belgian Franc 0.0000 0.0000

Other Currencies Date: 16/3/1995

Currency Bid Offer

Baharai Dinar 1.8840 1.8160

Lebanese Lira 0.041770 0.042230

Saudi Riyal 0.1826 0.1835

Kuwaiti Dinar 2.3100 2.3550

Qatari Riyal 0.1823 0.1835

Egyptian Pound 0.1856 0.2100

Omani Riyal 1.7660 1.7810

UAE Dirham 0.1863 0.1871

Creek Drachma 0.2745 0.2935

Cypriot Pound 1.4545 1.5525

For 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.4158/68	Canadian dollar
	1.3896/06	Deutschmarks
	1.5596/06	Dutch guilders
	1.1576/86	Swiss francs
	28.72/76	Belgian francs
	4.9610/60	French francs
	1710.4/5.4	Italian lire
	89.65/75	Japanese yen
	7.2425/25	Swedish crowns
	6.2380/30	Norwegian crowns
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Greek clubs join Real, Limoges in semis CSKA finish match with only 3 players

PIRAEUS, Greece (Agence) — Olympiakos Piraeus beat CSKA Moscow 79-45 (37-32) Thursday and became the second Greek club to advance to the final-four of the European Basketball Championship in Spain next month.

Earlier Thursday, Panathinaikos Athens trounced Bologna 99-56 to gain a berth in the final-four in Zaragoza, scheduled for 11-13 April.

Real Madrid of Spain and France's Limoges are the other two clubs with will join Panathinaikos and Olympiakos in the final-four.

The Russian coach Stanis-

four players as Vasili Karasev was expelled with five fouls. Five minutes before the end of the game, Alexei Vandeev also left the field with five fouls and the Russians

This is the second time in a row that the two Greek clubs participate in a final-four competition. Last season, Olympiakos and Panathinaikos finished 2nd and 3rd

The Spanish side fought back after the Croatians led for much of the first half and edged 43-40 ahead by the interval.

Backed by an enthusiastic home crowd, Madrid gained control in the second half to register a comfortable win with Joe Arlanckas notching 29 points and Arvidas Sabonis 22.

The Spaniards won the first leg 82-78.

EUROPEAN BASKETBALL

lav Eremin used only five players in the match because the other five were hospitalized with food poisoning.

finished the match with only three players. Olympiakos' coach Yiannis Ioannidis, from his part, also reduced the number of his team's players to three.

respectively in the final-four, held in Israel. Real Madrid won through to the final four by beating Croatia's Cibona Zagreb 82-70.

Stoichkov sent away for 2 weeks

BARCELONA (AFP) — Barcelona's volatile striker Hristo Stoichkov has been told to take a 15-day holiday in an increasingly bitter row with coach Johan Cruyff.

The club have also started disciplinary proceedings against the European Footballer of the Year, after critical comments he allegedly made about his teammates, and his days here could now be numbered.

Stoichkov says he is ready to quit the Spanish champions because of Cruyff, while teammates are furious with the Bulgarian international for his comments.

The bitterness started soon after Paris St. Germain knocked Barcelona out of the European Champions Cup quarter-finals in Paris on Wednesday night.

Thursday morning's Spanish press carried comments allegedly made by Stoichkov to Bulgarian daily Standart.

Stoichkov supposedly accused Cruyff of wanting his son Jordi and nephew Mariano Angoy in the first team so they could earn appearance bonuses, while the Bulgarian rated Jordi's footballing abilities as limited.

He reportedly went on to say that Barcelona would lose to a Bulgarian second division side were it not for him. Dutch defender Ronald Koeman and midfielder Jose Maria Bakero being in the side.

The reports immediately caused a furore in the Barcelona squad.

Koeman said: "If it's true he said all that, he doesn't deserve the confidence of his teammates, he no longer has a place in the team."

Gifted midfielder Josep Guardiola added: "We're perhaps not all as good as Stoichkov, but at least we respect the team spirit, and we are not as rude as this. He comments have betrayed the side."

Striker Aitor Beriguistain said: "The team might not turn its back on Stoichkov. He's broken the most basic rule of teamwork."

Stoichkov has since challenged the story, but Cruyff announced on Friday that it was time to take action.



Andre Agassi

Agassi's pursuit of Sampras continues

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (R) — The battle for the top spot in men's tennis heats up over the next 10 days as Andre Agassi's pursuit of Pete Sampras highlights the \$4.1 million Lipton Championships beginning on Friday.

Sampras will be looking for his third consecutive Lipton title, but his current 79-week stint as the number one player in the world has never seemed more tenuous with Agassi playing the best tennis of his life.

Sampras beat Agassi in the Indian Wells final on Monday to maintain his ranking edge, but their recent encounters have left the Wimbledon champion with a healthy respect for the man breathing down his neck.

"Andre, in my mind, is the one guy that I feel, even if I play well, he can still beat me," said Sampras, who lost the Australian Open final to Agassi in January in their other compelling 1995 meeting.

Sampras, who holds an 8-6 career edge over Agassi, will retain his number one status by reaching the semifinals, according to ATP officials. If Sampras stumbles before the final four, Agassi can over-

take his former Davis Cup teammate.

Making Sampras' task all the more difficult is his placement what is clearly the toughest half of the draw. He faces potential quarter-final challenges from the likes of former number one Jim Courier, the seventh seed, or 10th-seeded Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev.

Others who could get in the way of a successful title defense by Sampras include third seed Michael Chang, fifth-seeded German Michael Stich and another former number one, Stefan Edberg.

Even though Agassi can walk away from the tournament as the top ranked player in the world, the U.S. and Australian Open champion is looking farther down the road.

"I want to be number one at the end of the year," said Agassi, whose number two ranking is a career high. "I don't want to just slide into number one. I want to play the best tennis over the course of this year."

So far he has, with defeats extremely rare since his stirring U.S. Open victory last September.

Agassi's road to another showdown with Sampras

appears less demanding with his toughest potential quarter-final threats coming from eighth seed Wayne Ferreira of South Africa or ninth-seeded American Todd Martin.

None of the big names will see action on the first day however, with all seeds receiving first-round byes.

Although tournament officials say it is "highly unlikely," that Steffi Graf can regain her number one ranking from Arantxa Sanchez Vicario at Lipton, the German star can certainly narrow the gap if not close it altogether.

Graf, the defending champion and three-time winner

of the women's title, has the likes of sixth seed Natasha Zvereva of Belarus, third-seeded Czech Jana Novotna and eighth-seeded fellow German Anke Hober in her half of the draw.

The top-seeded Spaniard has also enjoyed her share of success in Lipton's outdoor hardcourts. Sanchez won the tournament in 1992 and 1993.

Those looking to keep Sanchez from a clash with Graf in the final include fourth-seeded American Lindsay Davenport, 1989 champion Gabriela Sabatini, Kimiko Date of Japan and rejuvenated American Mary Joe Fernandez.

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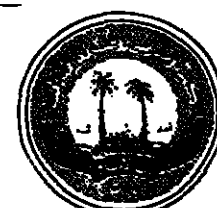
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Arsenal miss Chelsea, draw Sampdoria

GENEVA (AFP) — Arsenal will defend their European Cup Winners' Cup title against Sampdoria in the semi-finals after being kept apart from London neighbours Chelsea, who got Real Zaragoza, in Friday's draw here.

Fireworks can meanwhile be expected in the UEFA Cup after the draw pitched both the current league leaders in Italy and Germany — Juventus and Borussia Dortmund — against each other.

The other semi-final is another Italy-German affair, with Parma taking on Bayer Leverkusen.

The European Champions Cup fixtures were already known but Friday's draw decided who will start at home.

Bayern Munich begin in the Olympic stadium against Ajax Amsterdam, while Paris St. Germain start at home to title holders AC Milan.

All the European Cup matches will be played next month.

But there were sighs of relief all over London on Friday, after their two sides were kept apart, raising English hopes of a dream final Cup Winners' Cup final between Arsenal and Chelsea.

If that happened, the May 10 venue will be switched from the Parc des Princes in Paris to Wembley.

Arsenal battled their way into the semis, against the odds, by beating Auxerre 1-0

in Burgundy on Thursday night for a 2-1 aggregate win. After his stunning left-foot topped the French, Arsenal striker Ian Wright will now be looking to break the club's European goalscoring record, set at 11 by John Radford.

The Gunners' opponents in the semis, the first leg of which will be played on April 6 and the second on April 20, needed a penalty shoot-out to beat FC Porto.

Trailing 1-0 from the first leg, a superb 49th minute strike by Roberto Mancini made it all square, and after a goalless half-hour of extra-time, the Italians won the

said Dortmund coach Ottmar Hitzfeld. "We must show our team spirit, but willpower alone will not replace Championsat. At the end of the season, we'll be about a dozen goals short."

Dortmund knocked out another Italian club, Lazio, in the quarter-finals, while Juventus over another German club, Eintracht Frankfurt.

The ties will be played on April 4 and April 18.

Friday's Champions Cup draw must make AC Milan even more likely to retain their title, having the crucial

EUROPEAN DRAWS

shoot-out 5-3.

However, Sampdoria will be without England captain David Platt, who was sent off just before the end of extra time for a professional foul.

Platt, who misses both matches against Arsenal, brought down Porto midfielder Latapy with a lunging tackle as he headed for goal.

In the UEFA Cup, Borussia Dortmund will also be without one of their stars, Swiss goal ace Stephane Chapuisat.

The 25-year-old faces surgery after tearing knee ligaments in training on Thursday and will be out for the rest of the season. "It's an enormous loss,"

second leg at a packed San Siro Stadium.

Fabio Capello's men are certain to go looking for a draw in Paris on April 5, believing they can win at home on April 19.

PSG's sporting director, Jean-Michel Moutier, said: "The players would rather have had the second leg in Paris, but the coach, Luis Fernandez, is not bothered about going to Italy for the second match."

"We'll have to get a result at home and then aim to hold on over there."

Ajax are meanwhile favourites to meet Milan in the final to be held in Vienna on May 24.

British Police hold passports in bribery case

LONDON (R) — British police said Friday they had seized the passports of five people, including foreign soccer stars Bruce Grobbelaar and Hans Segers, arrested this week over allegations of bribery and match-rigging.

Premier League players Grobbelaar, Segers and John Fashanu were arrested on Tuesday and held for up to 36 hours before being released on bail without charge.

Fashanu's girlfriend, Melissa Kassampis, and Malaysian businessman Heng Suan Lim were also arrested and released after a four-month investigation in what could become Britain's biggest soccer scandal in 30 years.

"We have retained their passports so they cannot leave the country," a spokesman for Hampshire Police said on Friday. The three soccer players have all asserted their innocence of involvement in any alleged match-rigging.

Grobbelaar said he hoped to play for his team, Southampton, on Saturday. Manager Alan Ball said he had named the Zimbabwe-born player in his squad for the game against Nottingham Forest.

The Football Association (F.A.) said there was no ban on any of the three playing this weekend in Premier League matches. But the police action will prevent Grobbelaar playing international matches for Zimbabwe.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Finland wins gold in team jump

THUNDER BAY, Canada (AFP) — A thrilling final jump by Mika Lahtinen gave Finland the gold medal in the team 120-metre ski jump at the Nordic World Championships here Thursday. Lahtinen was the last jumper of the day and in both rounds he lifted his team to the lead. The Fins Ari-Pekka Nikkila, Jani Soininen, Janne Ahonen and Lahtinen totalled 889 points. Silver went to the German quartet of Hansjoerg Jakle, Dieter Thomas, Gerd Siegmund and Jens Weissfogel with 882.5 points.

Chinese athletes to stay in army barracks

BORAAS, Sweden (AFP) — The Chinese team competing at the Athletics World Championships in Gothenburg August 4-11 has turned down hotel accommodations for the event in favour of army barracks, organisers said. The 30-member Chinese delegation, including athletes, coaches and officials, will stay in barracks in Boraas, 50 kilometres (30 miles) southwest of Gothenburg in order to promote a "team feeling," organisers said.

Mansell misses first 2 races

LONDON (AP) — Former world champion driver Nigel Mansell will miss the first two races of the Formula One season because the cockpit of his new McLaren car is too small. McLaren made the announcement Friday saying Mansell could not achieve a comfortable driving position in the car. The team said a new chassis would be developed for Mansell and that another British driver, Mark Blundell, would replace him in the first two races. Mansell, winner of the Formula One championship in 1992 and the Indy Car title in 1993, flew home from testing in Portugal last week after complaining that the cockpit was too cramped for his 5-foot-10 (1.7 m), 167-pound (75 kg) frame. The 41-year-old Mansell will miss both the Brazilian Grand Prix March 26 and the Argentine race April 9.

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Shaping the world...one mind at a time

Spain ready to host '97 World Athletics Championship

MADRID (Agencies) — Spain's athletics chiefs announced Friday they are ready to stage the 1997 World Championships following Mexico's late withdrawal.

Spanish cities interested in staging the event have until May 5 to put together a bid to be examined by the national federation.

Madrid has already declared it is interested while Seville, which had been targeting the 1999 championships, and Barcelona, the 1992 Olympics venue that has just hosted the world indoor championships this month, have also been tipped as front-runners.

German city Stuttgart, the venue of the 1993 world showpiece, is also being talked of as a perfect stand-in.

Mexico withdrew as hosts on Wednesday over the country's worsening financial crisis, which also caused it to abandon plans to bid for the 2002 World Cup at the start of the month.

IAAF President Primo

Nebiolo said "a number of alternatives" were available.

Even before Wednesday's announcement, Madrid had already expressed an interest in hosting the championships if Mexico pulled out.

In an exchange of letters released by the IAAF, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon referred to his country's "recent number of serious, exceptional problems, particularly in the economic sector."

He wrote: "...Following profound analysis, I regret to inform you the Mexico must renounce the organisation of the 1997 World Championships."

Nebiolo, while "greatly saddened," told the president he fully understood "the painful motives."

He added: "Fortunately for us the world athletics movement is experiencing a period of stability and strength and I therefore feel confident that your decision will not severely impede

our activity."

Nebiolo told the president the IAAF would do everything possible to find a "suitable and dignified alternative."

The IAAF hopes to be able to name a replacement soon.

Mexico's decision to pull out came as no great surprise as the country continues to struggle with its economic problems.

Two weeks ago Mexico told soccer's world governing body FIFA that it no longer wanted to host the 2002 World Cup.

Alarm bells have been ringing in athletics corridors for some time and a special four-man committee had been set up at the beginning of the month by organisers in Mexico City to assess whether it was still economically feasible to stage the competition.

Seville has already applied for the 1999 championships, while Paris, Manchester, Athens and Johannesburg are also expected to bid.

Cavs cool off Jazz as Mark Price returns

CLEVELAND (R) — The Cleveland Cavaliers celebrated the return of star point guard Mark Price by cooling off the red-hot Jazz 93-85 on Thursday, ending Utah's nine-game winning streak.

Bobby Phills scored 24 points and Terrell Brandon had 18, including a pair of key baskets down the stretch, to lead the Cavs.

Karl Malone scored 21 points for the Jazz, who lost their first First Round Game to an Eastern Conference team this season.

Utah, now 47-17 and 11-1 on the road against the East, squandered a chance to move into a tie with the Orlando (48-16) for the best record in the league.

Price, who had missed the last 27 games with a broken right wrist, scored 10 points, including five in a 12-4 run that opened the fourth quarter.

"I can play a lot better but I know that it will come," Price said. "I just have to get out and play and get used to being out on the court again."

"Price's return was exactly what we needed," Cavs coach Mike Fratello said. "It gave Brandon a break."

In Charlotte, Charles Barkley scored 29 points, including a 3-pointer with 5.3 seconds remaining that lifted the Phoenix Suns to 108-105 victory over the slumping Hornets.

Barkley's tray from the right top of the circle snapped a 105-105 tie. A 3-pointer by Hershey Hawkins with 53 seconds left had pulled Charlotte into the last tie of the game.

"I was very lucky and fortunate to hit that last shot," said Barkley, who had 15 rebounds. "I did not care if I made or missed as long as it was a good shot."

Kevin Johnson had 17



Mark Price #25 of the Cleveland Cavaliers dribbles around an opponent (AFP photo)

points and 12 assists for Phoenix (47-16), which blew a 19-point third-quarter lead but moved a half game ahead of Utah in the race for the best record in the West.

Larry Johnson scored 21 points, Muggsy Bogues had 19 points and 12 assists and Alonzo Mourning got 18 points and 12 rebounds for the Hornets, who lost their third straight game, matching their longest slide of the season.

In San Antonio, David Robinson scored 10 of his 26 points in the third quarter and the Spurs seemed unaffected by the absence of Dennis Rodman in a 12-8 rout of the hapless Philadelphia 76ers.

Rodman, who leads the league in rebounding but has been in and out of trouble this season, did not arrive at

the Alamodome until about 30 minutes after tip-off. By that time, the Spurs already held a 10-point lead.

Sean Elliott added 20 points for the Spurs, who led by as many as 35 points. San Antonio has won 11 of its last 13 games and has beaten Philadelphia six straight times.

Dana Barros scored 17

points for the 76ers, who have lost six straight.

In Denver, Mahmoud Abdul Rauf Dale Ellis each scored 19 points to lead six teammates in double figures as the Nuggets won for the ninth time in 13 games, 123-101 over the Sacramento Kings.

Mitch Richmond led the Kings with 17 points.

RESULTS

Cleveland	93	Utah	85
Phoenix	108	Charlotte	105
Houston	104	Minnesota	97
San Antonio	112	Philadelphia	86
Denver	123	Sacramento	101
Portland	113	Boston	98
Seattle	103	Miami	76

The Kings, who have lost 12 of their last 14 contests, saw the Nuggets draw within one-half game of them for the final Western Conference playoff spot.

In Houston, Kenny Smith scored seven of his 23 points during a first-quarter spurt and the Rockets coasted to their fourth straight win, 104-97 over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Hakeem Olajuwon and Carl Herrera scored 19 points apiece for the Rockets, who led 56-42 at halftime and held a 22-point margin after three quarters.

Sea Rooks scored 21 points for the Timberwolves, who have lost six of their last seven games.

In Portland, Terry Porter and Jerome Kersey combined for 30 points off the bench to lift the surging Trail Blazers to a 113-98 victory over the Boston Celtics.

Rod Strickland had 19 points and 14 assists for the Blazers, who recorded their fifth victory in six games.

Dominique Wilkins scored 25 points and Sherman Douglas and Dee Brown added 18 apiece for the Celtics, who have lost six in a row, matching their longest slide of the season.

In Seattle, Detlef Schrempf scored 18 points to lead six of his teammates in double figures as the SuperSonics recorded their best defensive effort of the season in a 103-78 rout of the Miami Heat.

Gary Payton scored 16 points and Ervin Johnson added a career-high 15 for the SuperSonics, who held the Heat to their season-low point total and limited high-scoring Miami forward Glen Rice to seven points.

Kevin Gamble scored 16 points for Miami, losers of five straight games.

Top seeds cruise in NCAA

MEMPHIS (R) — Manhattan topped Oklahoma and Miami of Ohio stunned Arizona before three top seeds rolled to comfortable first-round wins as the NCAA Basketball tournament got underway in true "March madness" fashion on Thursday.

Regional top seeds Wake Forest (East), Kentucky (Southeast) and Kansas (Midwest) each had their way with 16th-seeded opening-round opponents.

West top seed UCLA, which enters the tournament as the nation's top ranked team for the first time since 1975, will play Florida International.

Wake Forest, led by Tim Duncan's 21 points, cruised to a 79-47 rout of North Carolina At. Wake Forest (25-5), winner of 11 straight games, next plays ninth seed Saint Louis, which edged Minnesota 64-61 in overtime.

Kentucky crushed Mt. St. Mary's 113-67. Tony Delk scored 20 points to lead five players in double figures for the Wildcats (26-4). On Saturday, Kentucky faces ninth seed Tulane, which edged Brigham Young 76-70.

Kansas struggled some before pulling away for a 82-68 win over Colgate. Kansas next takes on Western Kentucky, which ended the "fab five" era with an 82-76 over-

time victory over Michigan.

Pennsylvania nearly added to the two early upsets, but east regional fifth seed Alabama held on for a 91-85 overtime win after blowing a 12-point second-half lead.

Manhattan, seeded 13th, opened the second half with a 23-9 run en route to a 77-67 victory over fourth seed Oklahoma in the Southeast Regional at Memphis.

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♠ 9
♥ 10 8 5 4 3 2
♦ 10 4
♣ 3 7 8 2

WEST EAST
♠ A 8 5 4 ♠ 8 3
♥ K J 9 ♥ A Q 7
♦ A K 9 2 ♦ Q J 7 6 5 3
♣ 8 8 ♣ K 5

SOUTH
♠ K Q J 10 7 2
♥ 6
♦ 8
♣ A Q 10 6 4

The bidding:

West North East South
1♣ Pass 3♦ 3♠
Dbl Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of ♣

As trump control goes, so goes the hand. South's seemingly omnipotent spade suit was subject to pressure, but a defender failed to take advantage.

West's double of three spades was, at best, doubtful—exchange the king and queen of clubs and the hand would be unbeatable. Coupled with less than the best defense, it

turned into a disaster.

West led the king of diamonds and East dropped the queen, the correct technical play from a holding including the queen and jack. The defenders were on the right track when West continued with a diamond, forcing declarer to ruff. But when South led a low spade and West ducked, declarer had gained a valuable tempo and an even more vital entry to dummy to take the club finesse.

The jack of clubs was covered with the king and taken by the ace. The ace of spades was forced out,

declarer ruffed the diamond continuation, drew trumps and ran clubs to score an overtrick.

West should have risen with the ace of trumps and continued to force declarer with a diamond. With no entry to dummy, the best declarer can do is win five trump tricks and the ace of clubs. All the defenders need do is exit with a red suit whenever they gain the lead and declarer will be held to six tricks. Try it.

West's failure to rise with the ace of spades resulted in a four-trick swing!

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Richard Gere & Sharon Stone in INTERSECTION Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Jean-Claude Van Damme in TIME COP Shown in the morning Patrick Swayze — in FATHER HOOD Shown in the evening		Comedian star: Adel Imam — Bakhit & Andadilleh Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:30, 11:00 CONCORD '2' Jean-Claude Van Damme STREET FIGHTER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:45, 11:00		Musa Hijazin "Sum'a" in the political satire Hi Citizen written and directed by Mohammad Al Shawaf daily on 8:30 p.m. The theatre closes on Monday — Halifa Al Agha in the children's play ☆☆ Sa'd's Return ☆☆	Presents Abu Awwad in the social comedy Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Presents: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155 The theatre is closed: Saturdays & Sundays	

Jordan needs new ideas to address debts — Nabulsi

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan needs ideas to reduce its foreign debts after having brought down its external obligations to about \$5 billion in 1994 from more than \$8 billion in 1989, Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Mohammad Nabulsi said Friday.

Dr. Nabulsi also corrected a comment attributed to him by the official news agency that the Kingdom was hoping to reduce its external debt to \$3 billion in the next three years.

"What I said was that we have managed to reduce our foreign debts by \$3 billion in last five years," Dr. Nabulsi told the Jordan Times, referring to the comment carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra. "I did not speak about future prospects at all."

Dr. Nabulsi was referring to a briefing he presented to a visiting British delegation on Wednesday on Jordan's monetary status and policies.

Speaking to the Jordan Times on Friday, the Central Bank governor noted that Jordan's external debts stood at more than \$8 billion in 1989, when the burden sent the Kingdom's economy into a spin leading to a devaluation of the dinar.

Since then, the Kingdom, following a strict economic restructuring programme in coordination with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), stabilised the currency and secured debt rescheduling and partial debt write-off to bring down the figure to around \$5 billion.



Mohammad Nabulsi

The main components in the debt reduction were: the cancellation of a nearly \$1 billion aircraft deal with France, the buyback of \$900 million in commercial debts owed to foreign banks and about \$25 million owed to Brazil, and a partial buyback deal with the Soviet Union.

The deal with foreign banks involved rescheduling of the repayment but the government has already made provision to meet the obligation after 30 years as well as payment of interest in the meantime (official figures show that the total dues of the Kingdom in this respect are about \$195 million).

The U.S. offered a debt write-off of around \$700 million, Britain of \$75 million, Germany of about \$50 million, and Switzerland of about \$25 million. Jordan still owes the U.S. about \$140 million and the U.K. about \$550 million, but these are commercial debts extended in the form of export credit guarantees.

France has offered \$5 million debt relief and is in the process of finalising a debt-equity swap of \$100 million. In real terms, the swap means a reduction of around \$30 million.

Dr. Nabulsi noted that Jordan also borrowed around \$500 million in the past five years, and, as such, the reduction in real terms was around \$2.5 billion.

"Now we need new ideas to reduce the debts further," Dr. Nabulsi told the Jordan Times, noting that Japan which holds about \$1.7 billion of Jordan's debts, does not offer debt write-off.

In principle, World Bank officials say that Jordan should bring down its foreign debts to about 75 per cent of its gross domestic product to regain its pre-1988 international credit rating. This would mean a figure of about \$3.5 billion.

Given that increasing the GDP to over \$5 billion involves larger investments and economic activity, the Kingdom has to seek further debt write-off to bring its external debts to the suggested ratio.

European diplomats, notably French and German, have said that their governments may not be very forthcoming in extending further debt relief to Jordan. Michel Bock, the German charge d'affaires, also said recently that it may not be good for Jordan's chances of attracting foreign investments if the Kingdom received further debt relief. His argument was that if Jordan were to receive

(Continued on page 7)



DEPARTURE: Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, accompanied by his Egyptian counterpart Atef Sedki, reviews a guard of honour at Cairo airport upon his

departure for home on Friday after a two-day meeting of the Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee (see page one) (Petra photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

King donates JD 50,000 to Lebanon

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Thursday made a personal donation of JD 50,000 to support the steadfastness of the Israeli-occupied South Lebanon. The donation comes after a call by the Lebanese government to support the people of South Lebanon in observance of the 17th anniversary of the first Israeli invasion of South Lebanon. A statement issued by the Lebanese embassy in Amman on Monday called on Lebanese citizens inside and outside their country to commemorate the day by collecting donations, initiating development projects and launching campaigns in support of the Lebanese held in Israeli jails.

King, Queen condole Menem

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Thursday sent a cable of condolences to Argentine President Carlos Menem expressing his and Her Majesty Queen Noor's sympathies over the death of his son, Carlos Menem Jr. The Argentine president's son was killed Wednesday in a helicopter crash.

Pope considering Middle East trips

ROME (AP) — Pope John Paul II is considering a series of trips to the Middle East as part of church celebrations for 2000, his spokesman said Wednesday. Visits to Mount Sinai and holy places in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere is the Pope's "dream," said Joaquin Navarro. Speaking on a television programme on celebrations for the new millennium, Mr. Navarro said Pope John Paul hoped to make one or more trips by 2000. Mr. Navarro did not give details on the possible sites for a papal visit, but noted that some of the areas have important significance in the Bible.

Greece, Iran sign security accord

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran and Greece have signed a security cooperation accord to combat international terrorism, drug trafficking and the smuggling of antiquities, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported. The accord was signed in Tehran Thursday by Greek Public Order Minister Stelios Papathemelis and Iranian Interior Minister Mohammad Ali Besharati.

Saudi dissident evades British deportation

LONDON (R) — A Saudi dissident evaded deportation from Britain on Friday for the second time and his lawyers said immigration authorities wanted to arrest the man. A spokeswoman for Britain's Home Office confirmed Ahmad Khodair Said Al Zaharani — a former vice-consul at the Saudi consulate in Houston, Texas — had not obeyed orders to turn up at London's Gatwick airport at 10 a.m. "We are seeking to remove him," she said but declined to make any further comment.

Palestinians call off visit to Israeli site

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Young members of the Fateh movement called off an unprecedented visit to the Holocaust memorial of Yad Vashem here on Friday, their Israeli hosts said. Bassam Al Baz and Ibrahim Karisheh, both of the Fateh's youth movement from Gaza, were expected at the memorial. The Palestinians received a telephone call from Gaza telling them not to go after their visit was announced by the Israeli media, their hosts said. But there was no explanation of the move. Calling off the visit smacked of "the traditional Arab attitude of denying the Nazi genocide," charged the organisers, the youth wing of Israel's ruling Labour Party.

Islamic Jihad paper reappears after ban

GAZA CITY (AFP) — A pro-Islamic Jihad weekly reappeared Friday, a month after Palestinian police detained its journalists in the wake of anti-Israeli violence claimed by the hardline group. Five of Al Istiqal's eight journalists are still behind bars, held in the police crackdown following a suicide bombing near Tel Aviv that claimed 21 Israeli lives in January. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack, carried out by two Gazans. Al Istiqal's board apologised to its readers for being six pages thinner than usual and blamed the lack on the continued detention of its five journalists. "Al Istiqal was closed down because it gives the people a voice and presents their issues. It has returned stronger than before," the paper's editorial said.

Four beheaded in S. Arabia for murder

RIYADH (AFP) — Three Saudis and a Pakistani found guilty of murder were beheaded on Friday, raising the number of executions in Saudi Arabia to 39 so far this year. Ghoulam Farid of Pakistan was executed by sword in the western town of Al Baha for killing and robbing a Saudi woman, according to interior ministry statements broadcast on television. Two Saudi brothers, Ali and Abdullah Ben Ahmad Sami, were beheaded in the northwest Tabuk region for the murder and attempted rape of a young boy, the statement said. A third Saudi, Ali Ben Hilal Al Harbi, was executed in Medina in the west of the kingdom for bludgeoning a man to death with a hammer. Meanwhile two Pakistani men and an Egyptian woman had their right hands amputated for theft.

Jordan to tap Eurobond market soon for \$50m

By a Jordan Times staff reporter

AMMAN — Jordan will soon make a formal announcement of its first venture into the Eurobonds market since 1988 with a \$50 million issue to finance expansion of its telecommunications sector, official sources said.

They said the seven-year bonds, which will be guaranteed by the World Bank, would have a yield of around eight to 8.5 per cent.

The government's Economic Consultative Committee (ECC), which groups key ministers, economic experts and private sector representatives, discussed the issue this week and an formal announcement is expected soon, the sources said.

The proceeds from the Eurobonds, managed by an international bank in Europe, will be used by the state-owned Telecommunications Corporation (TCC), which will guarantee the interest on the paper, they said.

A three-year expansion programme under implementation by the TCC is estimated to cost more than \$200 million. The European Investment Bank, an arm of the European Union, is providing \$50 million, the Eximbank of Japan \$23 million and the World Bank \$20 million.

The rest of the needed funds is expected to be provided by the TCC itself.

In the meantime, the monopoly is in the process of commercialisation — being registered as a full commercial entity governed by the companies law instead of its present status as a semi-autonomous government entity — as the first step towards privatisation.

The corporation is undergoing changes in its administrative structure with a view to fully commercialising its operations before the end of the year.

(Continued on page 9)

Russia defies American pressure over Iran deal

MOSCOW (Agencies) — A Russian government official said on Friday Moscow would not bow to U.S. pressure to stop selling nuclear technology to Iran, although Washington plans to raise the issue at high-level talks next week.

Yuri Kotov, head of the Foreign Ministry's Third Asia Department, told Russia's Interfax News agency that Moscow would push on with a contract worth up to \$1 billion to help Iran build a nuclear plant at Bushehr on the Gulf coast.

Russia would not "follow orders from third countries," he said, brushing aside U.S. fears that the reactors could help Tehran develop its own nuclear arsenal.

"It (Russian-Iranian cooperation in nuclear technology) has an entirely peaceful orientation," Mr. Kotov told Interfax in an interview. Russia and Iran have both

maintained that the power station cannot be used to develop a nuclear bomb, but many experts insisted that Russian nuclear cooperation with Iran had "an exclusively peaceful orientation" and was no different from the U.S. nuclear cooperation with North Korea.

"It is important that Iran is open to inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency and none of the inspections has so far found any violations by Tehran," he said.

A senior U.S. official said on Wednesday that Secretary of State Warren Christopher would discuss the problem with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

The official said Washington would cite its cancellation of a lucrative oil deal between a U.S. firm and Iran in the talks to try to persuade Russia not to go ahead with the deal.

Turkey lifts Istanbul curfew; Ciller promises riots probe

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish officials on Friday lifted a curfew on Istanbul's sprawling Umraniye neighbourhood after days of civil unrest, despite reports of overnight bombing attacks around the city.

Unknown attackers hurled petrol bombs overnight at targets in five districts, including a pastry shop in Umraniye and a mosque in Gazi district, where the unrest began on Sunday, Anatolian news agency said. There were no casualties.

A spokeswoman for the Istanbul provincial governor's office said the curfew was lifted in Umraniye at 6:30 a.m. (0430 GMT), two days after four people died when protesters and police clashed in the working-class area on Istanbul's Asian side.

At least 17 people have been killed and some 100 wounded in the rioting since Sunday.

Prime minister Tansu Ciller said there would be an investigation into riots that

began on Sunday night when unknown gunmen fired on coffeeshops of the minority Muslim Alawite community, sparking clashes between protesters and the police.

"We will have an investigation into everything," she told Reuters. "But this will not hinder us from our purpose of a more comprehensive democracy and integration into the west."

She said claims by protesters that police fired at them would also be looked into.

Ms. Ciller spoke as she entered a seminar on Turkey and the European Union after visiting some of the wounded in hospital. On her first Istanbul trip since the riots, she was also due later to meet with Alawite community leaders.

The riots have clouded Turkey's joy at having signed a key customs union deal with the EU last week, and some officials suggested that the unrest may have been triggered by "dark forces" opposed to Ankara.

Khomeini proclaimed dead

NICOSIA (AP) — Ahmad Khomeini, son of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and an engine in the Byzantine world of Iranian politics, died Friday. He was 50.

After six days in coma, Khomeini "left for heavily abode today, plunging the nation in gloom," the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said.

A cleric and politician, Khomeini suffered a massive cardiac arrest Sunday and was pronounced "brain dead" after his admission to Baqiyatollah hospital in north Tehran.

A 30-man medical team struggled to keep him alive. But he succumbed to complications that left his liver, kidneys and respiratory system malfunctioning.

On Thursday, he was put on a life support machine after he was no longer able to breathe on his own. Dr. Hassan Afari told IRNA. He died at 3 p.m. (1130 GMT) Friday.

After years of living in the long shadow of his father, patriarch of the 1979 Islamic revolution, the younger Khomeini had been expected to make a grab for power following the ayatollah's death on June 3, 1989.

But instead he remained largely in the shadows, apparently seeking to act as a

power-broker rather than pursue the political ambitions he was known to harbour and which his father, while he was alive, had curbed.

Since shortly after his father's death, the middle-ranking Shiite Muslim cleric, known as a hojatoleslam, had been a member of the Supreme National Security Council. It oversees defence and state security policy and coordinates the activities of Iran's various defence and intelligence services.

There were many who believed that as bearer of the Khomeini name Ahmad would have had little trouble securing popular support for a political career. But he was outmanoeuvred by Iran's so-called pragmatists.

Hasbemi Rafsanjani's election as president on July 28, 1989, to all intents and purposes blocked Ahmad's hopes of attaining high office and political power in the emotional fallout after his father's death.

The appointment of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a Rafsanjani ally, to succeed Khomeini as Iran's spiritual leader was another setback for Ahmad.

Ahmad had been his father's eyes and ears during their days in exile and through the Islamic revolution that toppled the late Shah Mohammad Reza

Pahlavi, which gave him considerable influence.

Khomeini returned to Tehran after 14 years in exile on Feb. 1, 1979 after Pahlavi had been forced into exile. Tens days later, the Shah's last government collapsed and the Islamic republic was proclaimed.

During the late Khomeini's declining health from cancer, Ahmad and his married sister, Zahra, manipulated to a large extent what their father was told about political events.

As the old man's health failed, Ahmad's political ambitions heightened. But his father apparently stifled them. In 1980, then-President Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr proposed Ahmad as prime minister, but the ayatollah refused to allow his son to accept the post.

Many saw Ahmad as a weak person, easily influenced by more mature officials. His alliances, like many in Byzantine world of Tehran politics, switched several times over the years.

But he played a prominent role in persuading his father to disinherit his designated successor, Ayatollah Montazeri, in May 1989 because of his growing public criticism of the regime. He may have sought to elbow Ayatollah Montazeri aside so he could inherit his father's mantle.

U.S., Pakistan hope for insight into attacks after new arrests

ISLAMABAD (AP) — With the arrests of six suspects, Pakistan and the United States hope to uncover new evidence about the murky, mysterious world of Ramzi Yousef, alleged mastermind of New York's World Trade Centre bombing.

Pakistan police said Friday they had arrested six men with links to Mr. Yousef, who was apprehended Feb. 7 in Islamabad and extradited to New York to stand trial for the 1993 attack that left six dead and more than 1,000 injured.

Mr. Yousef allegedly called some or all of the suspects shortly before his arrest. The six were picked up March 11 in the northwestern city of Peshawar, and have been undergoing questioning at the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, just outside Islamabad.

Pakistan authorities have not linked the arrests to the World Trade Centre attack and have not filed any serious charges against the suspects — three Sudanese, an Iranian, a Pakistani, and a naturalised Pakistani born in Syria, according to officials.

However, investigators hope to find additional information about Mr. Yousef and possible links to a broader network.

The United States has worked closely with Pakistan on the Yousef case. The

Americans were tight-lipped about the latest arrests, though one diplomat said he was not aware of any U.S. plans to seek extradition of the suspects.

U.S. officials and Americans living in Peshawar have been advised to take extra security precautions against a possible anti-American backlash.

Two American workers at the U.S. consulate in the southern city of Karachi were gunned down March 8. The motive for the attack is not known, but a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) anti-terrorism team is looking into the possibility that the shooting was retaliation for Mr. Yousef's arrest and extradition.

American and Pakistani law enforcement officers, acting on a tip, tracked down Mr. Yousef at a guest house in Islamabad last month. Workers said Mr. Yousef made at least two calls to Peshawar the night before his arrest. The phone numbers were logged by the guest house staff and provided to police.

Four of the six men arrested shared an apartment and a phone in Peshawar, according to the News, an English-daily. At least three had links to Islamic relief groups. The men have lived in Peshawar for years, and

some have families in the city, according to sources. Little else was known about them.

The four non-Pakistanis were being held under a law called the maintenance of public order, which allows authorities to detain anyone for up to 90 days without charge.

The suspects have been identified as Fazel Omar, Adel Attayyaba, and Bahauddin, all Sudanese, Ibrahim Rasul, an Iranian, Fazlullah Hamidi, a Pakistani, and Saleem Abdul Rahim, a Syrian native who has become a Pakistani citizen.

Peshawar, a rough-and-ready frontier town near the border with Afghanistan, became a hotbed for militants during the 1980s. Thousands of young Muslim men, mostly Arabs, descended on Peshawar to receive military training, and then entered Afghanistan to battle the Soviet troops and the communist Afghan government. The United States spent billions of dollars to provide weapons to the Afghan resistance groups that trained the militants.

COLUMN

Michigan doctor removes wrong breast

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan (AP) — A surgeon performing a mastectomy on a cancer patient removed the wrong breast, a TV station reported. Citing unidentified sources, WZZM said that the 69-year-old woman went in for the operation at Butterworth Hospital in February. The report did not identify either the patient or the doctor. Hospital spokesman Tim Bulson said he could not confirm the report. "It's just that we have to be very careful to adhere to the laws of patient confidentiality," he said. "Unless or until someone comes forward with consent from the patient, we can't discuss any of the details." In Tampa, Florida, meanwhile, a patients' rights group appealed for tougher state laws to protect hospital patients who are victims of mistakes. The appeal came after a doctor mistakenly amputated the healthy foot of a patient; another patient got surgery on the wrong knee; and a patient died after being improperly disconnected from a ventilator — all within a month at University Community Hospital. The family of 77-year-old Leo Alfonso contends he struggled from air, pinned to his bed, for perhaps 10 minutes after he was mistakenly disconnected from a ventilator on March 3. A respiratory technician failed to remain in the room with him to determine if he was capable of breathing on his own, according to the Alfonso family's lawyer, Mr. Alfonso has one hand loosely tied in his bed, the other powerless from a stroke. He couldn't use his voice to call for help and couldn't cover a tracheotomy hole in his neck, the St. Petersburg Times reported. Willie King, whose good left foot was amputated instead of his diseased right one, has reached a \$250,000 settlement with the surgeon and continues to negotiate with the hospital, his lawyer said.

Kim Jong-il has unknown half-brother

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong-il has a still unknown half-brother who now serves as a military general in the North, an expert on North Korean affairs said here Friday. Kim Young-Hoon, director of the private think-tank in Washington, the Korean Security Council, identified the purported half-brother as Kim Sung-il. Gen. Sung-il is the child of Kim Jong-il's late father Kim Il-Sung, who died in July 1994, and a secretary, the Pyongyang-watcher said at a seminar. He did not give further details about the alleged half-brother, including his age, rank and his mother's identity. Kim Jong-il's acknowledged half-brother, Kim Pyong-il, is now North Korean ambassador to Finland. He is known to be one of four sons born between Kim Il-Sung and his surviving widow, Kim Song-Ae. Kim Jong-il, who turned 53 last month, was born to Kim Il-Sung's second wife Kim Jong-Suk, who died when Kim Jong-il was a young boy.

10 cups of green tea a day 'good for the heart'

LONDON (AP) — Men who drink at least 10 cups of green tea a day have lower cholesterol and may be less likely to suffer from heart disease, according to a Japanese study. The findings lend support to previous test tube and animal studies that suggest chemicals in green tea may ward off heart disease. The results will be published in Saturday's issue of the British Medical Journal. "The associations between green tea and serum total cholesterol ... imply that green tea may act preventively against cardiovascular disease," wrote Dr. K. Imai, one of the investigators from the Saitama Cancer Centre research institute in Saitama, Japan. Green tea is the name given to a wide variety of tea because they are green rather than black. Green tea can have as much caffeine as black tea, however, and is not the same thing as herbal tea.